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ABSTRACT

This compilation features articles on topics of special interest to parents that have been previously printed in "Communique," the official newspaper of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Articles include: (1) "Children and Their Attitudes Toward Reading: A Handout for Parents" (J. Mullein); (2) "About the Movie Ratings System" (M.D. Sissmsan); (3) "Psychological Tests: A Handout for Parents" (A. Canter); (4) "Trauma and Children: A Parent Handout for Helping Children Heal" (P.J. Lazarus); (5) "Interventions for Adolescents with Attention Disorders" (P. Dawson, R. Guare); (6) "Recommendations for Parents of Newcomer Students: How to Help Immigrant Teenagers Adjust in Their First Year" with Spanish translation (B. Pilon); (7) "Innovative Practice: Training for Parents of Immigrant Teens at Los Angeles Unified's Newcomer Center" (B. Pilon); (8) "Attachment: A Handout for Teachers" (N. Bayer, G. Citowitz, C. King); (9) "Attachment: A Handout for Parents" (N. Bayer, G. Citowitz, C. King); (10) "Homework Survival Guide: A Parental Handout" (P. Dawson); (11) "A School-Wide Social Skills Program: Parent Training" (C.C. Dee, S.M. Sheridan, R.N. Jones); (12) "Thomas Hehir and Federal Panelists Stress Need for School Psych Services" (K. Dwyer). Position statements on "Home School Collaboration," "School Violence," "Students with Attention Deficits," and "Student Grade Retention" are included. "Resolution on Children, Guns and Other Weapons" and "Resolution on Children and Violence in Media and Toys" of NAS are presented. (EMK)

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NASP

Communiqué

National Association of School Psychologists — Fall 1996 Special Edition

SPECIAL EDITION: Information for Parents

My child has a homework problem. What should I do? How can I get the school to help me with my child's behavior problems? Does my child have ADD?

The National Association of School Psychologists and its over 19,000 members are dedicated to building partnerships between schools and families to improve the education and mental health of our nation's children. When families and schools work together, children thrive. School psychologists believe that schools can better support families in today's busy world.

Over the past 12 years school psychology has produced numerous documents which give families and teachers consistent sets of suggestions to improve children's learning and behavior. NASP wants to share this information with you to use in your own relationships with your children and schools. We hope that you find these materials useful. Each year NASP develops about ten new parent-teacher handouts as well as other materials for families and schools. NASP has several publications which your could find helpful, including *Solve Your Child's School-Related Problems* which covers almost 40 common issues parents face in working with schools. This book is available in bookstores nationally. (See page 31.) ♦

For more information about NASP, see the back page.

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Children and Their Attitudes Toward Reading

A Handout for Parents

by Joann Mullen, Warren Ohio

Overview

In the classroom, reading instruction typically focuses on specific *skills* such as sounding out words and building vocabulary. However, the development of positive reading *attitudes* is often overlooked. Children with positive reading attitudes tend to be willing to read, enjoy reading, and become lifelong readers. On the other hand, children with poor attitudes toward reading may only read when they have to read, tend to avoid reading, and may even refuse to read altogether. A child's attitude toward reading may have a profound impact upon his or her overall academic progress.

Background

As children progress from early childhood through their school years, they develop strong likes and dislikes, including positive or negative attitudes toward reading. Parents may underestimate the critical role they play in the development and shaping of their child's reading attitude. For example, young children view their parents as experts. Therefore, the information and values that parents share with their children about the importance of reading can significantly affect the attitudes that children develop. Parents are also role models for their children. By observing the attitudes that their parents exhibit — both verbally and nonverbally — toward reading, children will tend to develop and demonstrate similar attitudes. Furthermore, because children (particularly preschoolers) seek and desire approval from their parents, they tend to develop the attitudes and values that parents will praise and reinforce.

What Can I Do as a Parent?

- Provide a variety of reading materials, such as magazines, newspapers, books, dictionaries, encyclopedias and other reference materials in the

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About The Movie Ratings System

by Matthew D. Sissman

Parents often ask questions about the movie ratings system and how it relates to their children. What follows is information contained in the booklet titled "The Voluntary Movie Ratings System," which was published by the Motion Picture Association of America in 1994.

The purpose of the ratings system is a simple one: to offer to parents some advance information about movies so that parents can decide what movies they want their children to see or not to see. The entire rostrum of the ratings program rests on the assumption of parental responsibility. If parents don't care, or if they are languid in guiding their children's movie going, the rating system becomes useless. Indeed, if you are 17 or over, or if you have no children, the ratings system has no meaning for you. Ratings are meant for parents and others who function in the role of care giver for children, and no one else. The ratings system currently contains five possible ratings, which are listed below in order of increasing severity.

G - General Audiences—All Ages Admitted

This is a film which contains nothing in theme, language, nudity and sex, violence, etc. which would, in the view of the Rating Board, be offensive to parents whose younger children view the film. The G rating is not a "certificate of approval" nor does it signify a children's film. Some snippets of language may go beyond polite conversation, but they are common, everyday expressions. No stronger words are present in G rated films. The violence is at a minimum. Nudity and sex scenes are not present; nor is there any drug use content.

PG - Parental Guidance Suggested
Some material may not be suitable for children

This is a film which clearly needs to be examined or inquired about by parents before they let their children attend. The label PG plainly states that parents may consider some material unsuitable for their children, but the parent must make the decision. Parents are warned against sending their children, without inquiry, to PG rated movies. There may be some profanity in these films. There may be violence, or brief nudity, but these elements are not deemed to be so intense as to require that parents be strongly cautioned beyond the suggestion of parental guidance. There is no drug use content in a PG rated film.

PG-13 - Parents strongly cautioned
Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13

This is a sterner warning to parents to determine for themselves the attendance in particular of their younger children, as they might consider some material not suited for them. Parents, by the rating, are alerted to be very careful about the attendance of their under-teenage children. A PG-13 film is a film which in the view of the Ratings Board leaps beyond the boundaries of the PG rating in theme, violence, nudity, sensuality, language, or other contents, but does not quite fit within the restricted R category. Any drug use content will initially require at least a PG-13 rating. In effect, the PG-13 cautions parents more strongly than usual to give special attention to this film before they allow their 12-year-olds and younger to attend.

If nudity is sexually oriented, the film will generally not be found in the PG-13 category. If violence is too rough or persistent, the film goes into the R (Restricted) rating. A film's single use of one of the harder sexually-derived words, though only as an expletive, shall require the Rating Board to issue that film at least a PG-13 rating. More than one such expletive must lead the Rating Board to issue a film an R rating, as must even one of these words used in a sexual context. These films can be rated less severely, however, if by a special vote, the Ratings Board feels that a lesser rating would more responsibly reflect the opinion of American parents. PG-13 places larger responsibilities on parents for their children's movie going. The voluntary rating system is not a surrogate parent, nor should it be. It cannot and should not insert itself in family decisions that only parents can and should make. Its purpose is to give pre-screening advance informational warnings,

■ Reading... *from page 1*

home. These can often be purchased at used bookstores or library sales. By having easy access to reading materials, your child will be more likely to read for pleasure and/or to obtain information.

- Let your child know how much you enjoy and learn from reading a book, newspaper article, magazine story, etc. As a result, your excitement and interest in reading will transfer to your child. Just observing *you* read helps your child to become aware of the value you place on reading.
- Read with and to your child. Young children as well as older children enjoy listening to stories read with and to them. Also consider setting aside a "family reading time" on a regular basis. Each member of the family could read a portion of a book.
- Visit the library so that your children can select their own reading materials based on their individual interests. Frequently, "story time" is offered at the local library, which can be a particularly enjoyable activity for young children.
- Acknowledge your child when he or she reads or shares information obtained from reading. Because children want to please their parents, your recognition and positive reaction will have a significant impact upon their desire to read.

Be aware of the many activities of modern society which compete for reading time — video games, television, sports, computers, etc. Parents today face a significant challenge to create a home environment that supports and instills a love for reading. However, your efforts will bring your children the gift of a life-long habit of reading! ♦

Joann Mullen is a school psychologist for the Trumbull County Board of Education, Warren, OH.

■ Movie Ratings... *from page 1*

so that parents can form their own judgments. PG-13 is designed to make these parental decisions easier for films between PG and R.

R - Restricted
Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian

In the opinion of the Ratings Board, this film definitely contains certain adult material. Parents are strongly urged to find out more about this film before they allow their children to accompany them. An R rated film has adult content that may include hard language, or tough violence, or nudity within sensual scenes, or drug abuse or other elements, or a combination of some of the above, so that parents are counseled, in advance to take this advisory very seriously. Parents must find out more about an R rated movie before they allow their teenagers to view it.

NC17 - No children under 17 admitted
(Age varies in some jurisdictions.)

This rating declares that the Ratings Board believes that this is a film that most parents will consider too adult for their youngsters under 17. No children will be admitted. NC17 does not necessarily mean "obscene or pornographic" in the oft-accepted meaning of those words. The Board does not and cannot mark films with those words. These are legal terms and are for courts to decide. The reason for the application of an NC17 rating can mean strong violence or sex or aberrational behavior or drug abuse or any other element which, when present, most parents would consider too strong and therefore off-limits for viewing by their children.

That is a brief look at some of the elements contained in films which cause the Rating Board to place them into one category or another. Please remember that the ratings system only has meaning and effectiveness if we, as parents and care givers, make it our business to heed the warnings that the ratings attempt to give us. In this day, with video rentals making many movies readily available to children, it is now more important than ever that we be actively involved in what our children are watching, by understanding what the ratings mean. If you would like more information on this topic, write or phone the Motion Picture Association of America at either of the addresses listed below:

15503 Venture Blvd.
Encino CA 91436
(813) 995-6600

or

1600 Eye Street NW
Washington DC 20006
(202) 293-1966

Until next time . . . see you at the movies.

The information contained above was adapted with permission from the booklet "The Voluntary Movie Rating System" published by the Motion Picture Association of America in 1994. ♦

Matthew D. Sissman is a school psychologist in Latham, New York.

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Communiqué

THIS PUBLICATION has been compiled from articles that previously ran in the *Communiqué*, the official newspaper of the National Association of School Psychologists.

The content of this document reflects the position and ideas of the authors and does not necessarily represent the position or ideas of the National Association of School Psychologists.

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Families Talk with School Psychologists at Federation of Families Conference

Saturday, November 12 1994, Washington DC. As part of the Annual Meeting of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH), an open forum was held by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) to begin an ongoing dialogue with parents on what kinds of services they want from school psychologists. With a capacity crowd of more than 65 parents and advocates, the message was clear. Parents want more direct services and consultation from school psychologists and they want these services on their child's individualized education program (IEP). Many reported being told that school psychologists were "too busy" to provide related services to students with serious emotional disturbance (SED).

Susan Gorin, Executive Director of NASP, started off the session with an overview of the Association on behalf of its 17,000 members. She also talked about NASP's mission to promote the rights, welfare, education and mental health of all children and youth, and to advance the profession of school psychology. She talked about the many coalitions and organizations with which NASP works to meet these goals, including the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. Kevin P. Dwyer, a founding board member of the Federation and present Assistant Executive Director of NASP, outlined what school psychologists are trained to do and which related psychological services can be included on a child's IEP. Robin Satchell, member of NASP's Government and Professional Relations Committee and Certification Board, shared her experiences as a school psychologist in Baltimore City and Anne Arundell County, Maryland. She assisted many of the parents in framing their questions, concerns and recommendations. Several recommendations and comments were generated, including:

1. Mandate that school psychologists be a part of the IEP team. "We need a continuity of service throughout the U.S. on the role of the school psychologist for our children."
2. Mandate that the question of "psychological services" be asked at each IEP meeting and that services be provided when the parents want them.
3. Have a national standard for identifying children with SED so that each state cannot refuse services based upon that state's "discrepancy model" or some other exclusionary tactic. Stop using I.Q. tests to determine eligibility.
4. Develop a coalition to get more services for children with SED and their families.
5. Have school psychologists work with child/family therapists' to translate the therapy plan to school personnel and classroom teachers. Allow time for the therapist, teachers and parents to meet.
6. Tell parents more about the services that school psychologists are trained to provide. "I didn't know school psychologists could do anything but test. We need more information like this."
7. Parents need some way to monitor when counseling services are or are not being provided. School personnel should not try to hide problems or "walk on eggs" - service problems should be discussed openly.
8. Parents need school psychologists to be their allies, to support their concerns and to listen to their frustrations.
9. School psychologists should assist parents in monitoring IEP progress. "After all, school psychologists are the experts in measurement."
10. School psychological reports should be linked to interventions. "They should be useful for services and emotional and behavioral issues should be addressed." The results should be shared with parents before they are shared with others. Parents should have the right to request that errors be removed from psychological reports.
11. School psychologists need to be part of multiagency service teams and to work cooperatively with professionals outside the schools. "The school psychologist should be the catalyst for the parents for ongoing communication between the private therapist and the teacher."
12. School psychologists should provide social skills training, self-esteem building and ways for children to learn to cope with the stress of school - how not to be victimized for being disabled.
13. Parents want to find ways to help school psychologists and social workers get the time to provide services.
14. Each school should have a school psychologist!

Family Friendly Schools Needed

The number of comments from parents showing frustration as the result of unfriendly, insensitive experiences with schools was a real eye-opener for the NASP representatives. Some negative contacts with school psychologists were also openly discussed. The meeting's informal climate allowed parents to share not only problems but solutions across states and systems.

Although parents in rural and urban systems seemed to have the most dramatic horror stories, suburban systems, richer in services, were equally lax in providing the needed family-focused support required for the child to succeed in school. "I didn't know Fairfax County had school psychologists!" said one parent whose seriously disturbed child has been in the schools three years. A Connecticut parent of a chronically emotionally disturbed youth stated that she was told to get private therapy, and that school psychological services were not available in her suburban district. An elderly grandmother from rural Louisiana, responsible for a very troubled six-year-old, has been frustrated by a system that sees suspension as the solution and offers nothing else. The parent of a child with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder said that although her child was failing all classes, she did not "qualify" for special education and related services because there was not a discrepancy between her ability and achievement test scores.

Parents felt that many schools were indifferent to the stress that parents have in raising a child with serious emotional problems.

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Psychological Tests
A Handout for Parents

Adapted by Andrea Canter (Minneapolis Schools) from *Solve Your Child's School-Related Problems*, National Association of School Psychologists, Michael Martin and Cynthia Waltman-Greenwood, Editors

Overview

When their child is referred for a "psychological evaluation," parents may be upset, confused or worried. It is important to remember that a referral to a psychologist for an evaluation merely means that you or your child's teachers need more information in order to better understand how to help him or her achieve success at home or at school. If your child is referred to a school psychologist for testing at school, you must give your permission before any testing can begin. It is important that parents understand *why* testing is requested, *what areas of learning and development* will be addressed by testing, *what types of tests* will be given and by whom, and *how the test results will be used* to help your child. You may be invited by the school to a conference to discuss the referral or you may request a meeting with the teacher, psychologist and other personnel. You and your child will benefit most from testing if you feel fully informed and trust the professionals involved.

Parents sometimes worry that their child will react negatively or fearfully to testing. If you are comfortable with the testing plan, you will be able to convey your comfort and support to your child. Most children actually enjoy the individual attention they receive through testing, and many find the tasks to be fun and challenging. Children who tend to be wary of new situations will perform better if they have a chance to meet the psychologist prior to formal testing, and if they have a chance to discuss the reasons for testing and expectations for their performance. Children need to understand that parents and teachers only expect them to "do the best you can" and that they can not "fail" these tests.

What kinds of tests will be given to my child?

A good psychological evaluation uses several different methods to obtain information about your child, rather than relying on *one* test or *only* tests. Procedures may include observations in the classroom, information from teachers, parents and school or health records, as well as specific tests. Tests generally can be categorized as follows:

1. **Screening versus diagnostic tests:** *Screening* tests are brief and help provide a general picture of a student's skills or behavior but do not provide in-depth information. They are used to determine if additional testing in a given area is needed. *Diagnostic* tests are longer and provide more detailed information about a specific area, such as intelligence or reading or behavior problems. These are used to determine specifically how well your child performs, where your child is having difficulty and what instruction or support is needed to help your child.

2. **Norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced tests:** *Norm-referenced* tests compare your child to other children of the same age or grade level, usually on a national or regional level. Results indicate how far above or below "average" your child is functioning in a given skill or behavioral area. Most norm-referenced tests used by psychologists are "standardized" — they have been commercially developed using large numbers of children and are administered and scored in a standard fashion to assure consistency in results. The "norm" (point of reference) used is based on the population of students used by the test publisher to develop the test and to determine how typical children perform. *Criterion-referenced* tests compare your child's skills to a specific level of performance — they measure what has been learned. For example, in testing math skills, a criterion-referenced test might identify how many basic math facts 1-10 your child has learned. There are many published criterion-referenced tests, but teachers and others will often develop such tests based on the materials they use for instruction in their classrooms.

What tests will the psychologist give to my child?

Psychologists use a variety of tests which most often are diagnostic and which may be either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced. The most common types of psychological tests include:

- **Intelligence tests:** Popularly called "IQ" tests, intelligence tests are norm-referenced, standardized, diagnostic tools which very broadly measure traits which predict academic success. There are many different theories and definitions of "intelligence," but the tests most commonly used by psychologists in schools and clinics generally provide an overall score or estimate of "ability" to learn what is typically taught in school. These tests often include a combination of "verbal" (language-based) tasks such as vocabulary and general fund of information and "performance" (nonverbal) tasks such as puzzles and copying patterns. Intelligence tests have become controversial because ethnic and linguistic minority individuals tend to score

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■ Families Talk... *from page 4*

Their lives are frequently limited by the restraints of care; there is little respite. Financial burdens of treatment are overwhelming and insurance constraints for mental health care make it worse. What also causes stress is the lack of coordination between agencies and providers. Parents are shuffled around from agency to agency, required to restate their needs over and over. Schools that are sensitive to these issues are more likely to build an effective working relationship with families of children who have emotional needs which hamper learning. School psychologists are key to a positive school system response.

Parents are interested in getting school psychological services for their children and want to work with school psychologists in this effort. The idea of replicating this national "focus group" meeting format at the state and local levels seems possible. When school psychologists reach out, consumers and their advocates become allies. Try a focus group. For the names of your state and local Federation of Families affiliates call the Federation's national office: (703) 684-7710. ◆

Trauma and Children

A Parent Handout for Helping Children Heal

by Philip J. Lazarus
Florida International University

Background

Every parent at one time has worried about harm befalling their children. When trauma to children occurs, the territory of everyday life becomes frightening and unfamiliar not only for children but parents as well. Parents may find themselves overcome with anxiety and fear. Trauma may send a shockwave to the system and parents may respond with a wide range of feelings. These feelings may include a sense of disbelief, helplessness, isolation, despair, or horror. Parents may try to make sense out of a senseless act. Who can prepare for their children being physically or sexually assaulted, kidnaped, mugged, robbed or involved in a severe automobile accident? Who can prepare for children being diagnosed with a life threatening illness or experiencing a natural or man-made disaster?

Traumas typically occur suddenly, often leaving children little or no time to prepare physically or emotionally. Traumas are unpredictable and outside what is to be expected in children's lives. During a trauma, children experience intense fear, horror or helplessness. Typical methods of coping no longer work. Following trauma, children require extra support and need to learn new coping strategies.

Parents can be instrumental in their children's recovery. Therefore, helping children recover from a trauma is a family matter. Parents need to take the lead and model positive coping. Yet parents themselves may require extra information, support and resources to assist their children. Some first steps that parents can take are to understand the impact and symptoms of trauma and how to help in the aftermath. This handout provides this information.

The Impact of Trauma

Trauma can change the way children view their world. Assumptions about safety and security are now challenged. Children's reactions will depend upon the severity of the trauma, their personality makeup, their characteristic coping style and the availability of support. It is common for children to regress both behaviorally and academically following a trauma. A constructive way to view the situation is that they are normal children in an abnormal circumstance.

It is natural for children to first experience some sort of *denial*. For example, children may insist upon returning to a house that

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■ Psychological Tests... *from page 1*

lower than individuals from white middle class backgrounds and are not usually well-represented in the norming populations used by test publishers. Results should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Commonly used tests include the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (Third Edition), Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Stanford-Binet (Fourth Edition) and Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery.

- **Achievement tests:** These tests, both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced, measure basic academic skills and content area information acquired through schooling. Psychological evaluations will likely consider specific basic skills needed to master reading, math and written language tasks in order to help identify where instruction needs to be provided or modified. Commonly used achievement tests include the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery: Tests of Achievement, Kaufman Tests of Educational Achievement, Key Math and Peabody Individual Achievement Test.

- **Behavior inventories:** These are usually checklists or rating scales completed either by the child about his or her own feelings and behavior, or by a familiar adult (parent or teacher) who has observed the child's behavior in different situations. Some rating scales are norm-referenced and standardized, while others are criterion-referenced and identify "critical" concerns or serve as screening tools to determine the need for further testing. These tools can show how a child's behavior is perceived in different settings by different individuals, or how a child perceives his or her own behavior compared to the perceptions of others. These procedures can provide very valuable information, but they have some drawbacks: The results are only accurate if the child or adult is able to honestly respond to the questions asked; it can be confusing if different individuals rate behaviors of the same child quite differently. Commonly used examples include the Behavior Assessment System for Children and the Child Behavior Checklists.

- **Personality tests:** Tests which measure personality traits and emotional adjustment include both straight- forward questionnaires and more subjective "projective" procedures. *Diagnostic interviews* and *questionnaires* involve directly asking children about their feelings in specific situations, about their fears and concerns, etc. *Projective tests* include a variety of procedures which *indirectly* evaluate feelings and personality characteristics by providing the child with vague or ambiguous situations, pictures, stories, etc. and considering the responses as indicators of underlying personality traits, fears, anxieties and life stressors. Drawings by the child can also be used in this manner. Interpretation of projective tests is far more subjective than interpretation of direct questions and behavior inventories. Some commonly used personality tests include the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory-Adolescent Form (MMPI-A) and projectives such as the Rorschach (inkblots) and Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). ♦

Additional Resource for Parents

National Association of School Psychologists (Martin, M. & Waltman-Greenwood, C., Eds.) (1995). *Solve your child's school-related problems*. New York: HarperPerenniel.

■ Trauma and Children... *from page 6*

has been destroyed. *Fears, worries or nightmares* are common following a trauma. *Sleep disturbances or eating difficulties* may happen. Also children may begin to *regress emotionally* or act younger than their chronological age. They also may become more *clinging, unhappy and needy of parental attention and comfort*. Feelings of *irritability, anger, sadness or guilt* may often emerge. *Somatic complaints* such as headaches, stomachaches or sweating are not unusual. Some *loss of interest in school and poor concentration* are some other common reactions.

Symptoms Associated With Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Following a trauma children may experience some of the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The main symptoms are as follows:

Reexperiencing of the trauma during play or dreams. For example, children may:

- Repeatedly act out what happened when playing with toys
- Have many distressing dreams about the trauma
- Be distressed when exposed to events that resemble the trauma or at the anniversary of the trauma
- Act or feel as if the trauma is happening again

Avoidance of reminders of the trauma and general numbness to all emotional topics. For example, children may:

- Avoid all activities that remind them of the trauma
- Withdraw from other people
- Have difficulty feeling positive emotions

Increased "arousal" symptoms. For example, children may:

- Have difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Be irritable or quick to anger
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Startle more easily

What Can I Do as a Parent Following a Trauma?

- ***Establish a sense of safety and security.*** It is essential that children feel protected, safe and secure in the aftermath of a trauma. Ensure that all basic needs are met, including love, care and physical closeness. Spend extra time to let children know that someone will nurture and protect them. Children will need a lot of comforting and reassurance.
- ***Listen actively to your children.*** Seek first to understand before trying to be understood. Parents may underestimate the extent of the trauma experienced by their children. It is often not as important what you say, but that you listen with empathy and patience. In some instances your children may be reluctant to initiate conversations about trauma. If so, it may be helpful to ask them what they think other children felt or thought about the event. Also, it may be easier for children to tell what happened (e.g., what they saw, heard, smelled, physically felt) before they can discuss their feelings about the trauma. In other instances, children will want to tell their parents the story of the trauma over and over. Retelling is part of the healing process. Children need to tell their stories and have their parents listen, again and again to each and every agonizing detail.
- ***Help your children express all their emotions.*** It is important to talk to your children about the tragedy - to address the suddenness and irrationality of the disaster. Reenactment and play about the trauma should be encouraged. It is helpful to ensure that children have time to paint, draw or write about the event. Provide toys that may enable children to work through the trauma. Examples may include such items as a toy fire engine, ambulances, fire extinguisher, doctor kit, etc. for a girl injured in a fire. Imagining alternate endings to the disaster may help empower your children and allow them to feel less helpless in the aftermath of a tragedy.
- ***Validate your childrens' feelings.*** Help children understand that following a trauma all feelings are acceptable. Children will probably experience a myriad of feelings which could include shame, rage, anger, sadness, guilt, pain, isolation, loneliness and fear. Help your children understand that what they are experiencing is *normal* and to be expected.
- ***Allow your children the opportunity to regress as necessary.*** This is important so that they may "emotionally regroup". For example, your children may request to sleep in your bed with the lights on or you may need to drive your children to school. Previously developed skills may seem to disappear or deteriorate. Bed wetting or thumb sucking may occur. Aggression and anger may emerge in a previously non-aggressive child. Be patient and tolerant and never ridicule. Remember that most regression following a trauma is temporary.
- ***Help children clear up misconceptions.*** Help correct misunderstandings regarding the cause or nature of the trauma, especially those that relate to inappropriate guilt, shame, embarrassment or fear. (Examples may be " I should have been able to save my brother from the car wreck." "God struck my sister dead because God was angry at her." "My father died of cancer and I will catch it from him.")
- ***Educate yourself about trauma and crisis.*** The more you know about trauma, the more empowered you may feel. To help educate yourself, consider setting up a conference with the school psychologist or mental health professional in your school. A good place to start is by reading the text listed below under "Resource for Parents."
- ***Help predict and prepare.*** If your children need to go to a funeral or deal with surgery, carefully explain what will happen each step of the way. Allow your children to ask all kinds of questions. If they need to appear in court, explain what they will see, hear, do, etc.
- ***Arrange support for yourself and your family as necessary.*** Consult with your clergy, rabbi, physician and friends as necessary. You may need extra emotional, religious, medical and/or psychological support. If possible take appropriate time for recreational or pleasurable experiences with your children to establish a sense of normalcy and continuity.
- ***Communicate with the school and staff about what occurred.*** Most teachers will be understanding and helpful if they know that children had a traumatic experience. Teachers may be able

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■ Trauma and Children... *from page 7*

to provide additional support both educationally and emotionally. They can also provide information to doctors or therapists or alert you to troublesome behaviors they observe.

- ***Affirm that your children are capable of coping and healing in the aftermath of a trauma.*** Plant "emotional seeds" that express confidence in your children's ability to heal. Remember the messages that you give your children have incredible power.
- ***Seek professional assistance for your children and family as necessary.*** When seeking help, make sure the professional has experience with children and has treated crisis and trauma. Feel free to discuss with the therapist all your concerns and all aspects of treatment. If your children are experiencing the symptoms of PTSD, then therapy may be warranted.

What Can I Say As A Parent Following A Trauma?

- Sometimes knowing exactly what to say is difficult. However, your emotional expression of love and concern is more important than words. Just saying "This is very hard for us" can lead to emotional relief and understanding.
- Always be honest with your children about what has happened and what may occur. Remember that following a trauma, children may lose a sense of trust about the safety and security of the world. Therefore, honesty is essential so your children can maintain a sense of trust.
- Respect your children's fears. Children can not be helped by trying to argue them out of their fears by appeals to bravery or reason. What is most helpful is an approach that says "I know you are feeling frightened of _____ now." This can be followed by an offer of assistance and support by saying, "Let's see what we can do to make this less scary for you."
- Make sure that your children know that your are aware of the seriousness of the situation. Allow your children to cry. Saying to your children "Don't cry, everything will be fine" denies the seriousness of the situation.
- Try to recognize your children's feelings and put them into words. For example, if a child's close friend died in an automobile accident, you might say to your child "You are sad and angry that your friend was killed. I know that you must miss him very much." Or if a child feels overwhelmed by fears in the aftermath of a hurricane, you may say, "I know that you are frightened, but we have a plan to protect us if another hurricane occurs."

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NETWORK (KEN) has been established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) to distribute free brochures, fact sheets and other materials for families, health professionals, educators and others who seek information about mental health problems. The KEN toll free number is (800) 789-2647.

What Should I Do If I Believe My Child May Be Suffering From PTSD?

Consult with your local school psychologist or contact a mental health professional who has experience in this area such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or mental health counselor. Your school psychologist or pediatrician may direct you to the appropriate resources.

What Type Of Therapy Is Recommended For Traumatized Children?

A variety of methods may be used depending on the orientation of a particular therapist. Very different approaches to the same problem can be equally effective when undertaken by an insightful and skilled professional. Approaches may include individual, group or family therapy. Therapists often use play, art and drama methods in their treatment as well as "cognitive-behavioral" approaches, which help children reinterpret events and feelings in a more positive way , or in some cases they might use clinical hypnosis. As part of the therapy experience, children will be guided to reprocess the trauma in a safe and supportive environment. In some instances medication may be used to control severe anxiety, depression or sleeplessness. However, medication should not be used as a substitute for psychotherapy for traumatized children.

If I Seek Therapeutic Services For My Children, What Will Be The Goals of Therapy?

The goals of therapy with traumatized children should include:

- Gaining a sense of mastery and control over one's life
- The safe expression and release of feelings
- Relief of painful symptoms and post traumatic behaviors
- Minimizing the scars of trauma
- Corrections of any misunderstandings and self-blame
- Restoration of hope regarding the future
- Establishing a renewed sense of trust in oneself and the world
- Developing perspective and distance regarding the trauma

Summary

Helping children recover from trauma is a family matter. It is important to maintain an open discussion of the trauma and recognize the feelings of all family members. Focus on the immediate needs of the children, and take a one-day-at-a-time approach. Find and use support systems outside of the family. Always maintain a positive image of your children as healers and survivors. ♦

Resource for Parents

Monahon, C. (1993). *Children and trauma: A parent's guide to helping children heal*. New York: Lexington Books.

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Interventions For Adolescents With Attention Disorders

Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
Center for Learning and Attention Disorders
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Areas of Difficulty	Possible Interventions
Organization	
Doesn't do homework	Homework Survival Guide (page 18, this issue) Incentive system Supervised study hall Alternative homework assignments Self-designed homework After school homework sessions in school
Loses homework/possessions	Daily check-ins (home/school)—monitoring system Organizational aids (checklists/reminders/routines) Targeted incentive system
Doesn't come to class prepared	Case manager or other monitoring system Spare materials in classes students can borrow/rent Targeted incentive system
Disorganized notebooks	Monitoring system (e.g., daily notebook check) Don't penalize (e.g., grading modifications)
Messy work	Computer access Specify clear criteria —have student redo if work doesn't meet criteria Incentive system Modify expectations
Planning	
Prioritizing	Students with attention disorders need assistance in these areas and cannot be expected to perform these skills without adequate instruction and practice. This could occur in planning periods built into the student's day. Instruction may follow a sequence such as: 1) define skill to be learned; 2) model skill; 3) have student engage in verbal rehearsal; 4) guided practice; 5) independent practice with follow-up. A second option is the use of a coach (described in Hallowell & Ratey, *Driven to Distraction*).
Remembering	
Handing in assignments	Case manager to monitor Home/school daily check-in Incentive system
Knowing when things are due	Case manager to monitor Home/school daily check-in Incentive system
Bringing materials to/from school	Case manager to monitor Home/school daily check-in Incentive system

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Areas of Difficulty	Possible Interventions
Math facts/other rote memory tasks	Memory aids Allow use of calculators Reduce demands/expectations
Sequence of steps to follow (e.g. math)	Construct personalized instructional manual with templates, directions, examples of problems, models, etc.
Following Directions	
Verbal	Provide study partner Repeat directions individually
Written	Check-in with student/clarify as necessary Highlight directions for student/have student highlight
Written Production	
Poor fine motor skills/ motor imprecision	Allow to dictate written responses Allow the use of tape recorders Access to computers for writing assignments Reduce writing requirements
Discrepancy between thinking/ writing speed	Access to computers/recorders Opportunity to respond orally
Difficulty organizing thoughts	Assistance with prewriting activities (e.g., brainstorming, mind mapping, outlining) Writing ideas on post-its, rearranging to outline
Problems with initiation/word retrieval	Brainstorming vocabulary, key concepts Helping getting started Close-ended writing tasks
Proofreading problems	Use spellcheck Have another student/adult proofread Use proofreading checklist to cue for specific errors
Problems with Test-Taking	
Careless mistakes	Allow test re-takes Supervise checking work
Can't finish within time limits	Allow extra time Break testing into several sessions
Writing problems	Oral exams Short answer/multiple choice vs. essay Reduce demands/allow extra time
Distracted during testing	Let student take test in quiet room
Anxiety	Teach test-taking strategies Teach relaxation strategies Let student take test away from other students
Difficulties with retrieval	Multiple choice tests Open book tests Provide sample items/templates Cues to aid retrieval during test Teach test-taking strategies

Areas of Difficulty	Possible Interventions
Social Skills	
Impulsive	Consider the following for all social skills problems: Incentive systems
Disruptive	Negotiated behavior contract Match student with teacher
Apathetic	High rate of personalized positive feedback Alternative curriculum
Discouraged	Credit for out-of-school learning Work-study programs
Depressed	Hands-on learning
Cognitive Style	
Fast and sloppy	Assign shorter tasks with criterion for accuracy Teach self-evaluation/goal-setting re accuracy or quantity
Problems with initiation	Assign close-ended tasks Provide templates Help student get started (e.g., walk through 1st few items/brainstorm ideas, etc.) Assign study partner Use cooperative learning Assign shorter task/break tasks down Obtain verbal commitments (e.g., re start times)
Low frustration tolerance	Modify assignments Ensure high rate of success Frequent reinforcement Provide individual help Self-designed assignments (brainstorm ideas)
Processing speed/simultaneous processing problems (e.g., can't listen and take notes)	Provide individual help Tape lectures Provide note-takers or access to teacher notes Present material in organized, sequential fashion Reduce assignments/allow extra time
Craves novelty/hates repetition	Avoid lecture style classes Avoid classes with heavy rote learning or worksheet requirements Computers/technology Use cooperative learning Use hands on learning/discussion format Self-designed assignments Individualized work contracts Assign to high energy teachers Avoid needless repetition Build in breaks/opportunities to move around Vary formats within/across class periods ♦

Recommendations For Parents Of Newcomer Students:

How to Help Immigrant Teenagers Adjust in Their First Year

by Bradley Pilon

- Spend time alone with your child. There is no replacement for time alone, and outings with the entire family don't count. This is especially true if a child is being re-united with his or her parent(s) after a long separation.
- Take time to let your child go over the history of events as they occurred during your absence. Many children don't want to mention the bad things that have happened to protect their parents, yet they also harbor anger that the parents were not there to protect them. They may sound like they understand the need to separate in order for the family to immigrate, but usually still need reassurances to get beyond the feelings of abandonment, no matter how logical and mature they may sound.
- Remember that money does not equal love. The fact that it may have cost a great deal to bring a family to the United States does not mean that the child feels more loved as a result. Adults and children alike need affection to come separately from the mention of money.
- Keep the details of your intimate life private. Children do not need the responsibility of knowing about marital difficulties, past or present, and may feel guilty or overwhelmed if they have taken sides. On the other hand, many children may judge their parents and their relationships, and this is part of the difficulty of raising a teenager, but the teen's opinion should not be used in place of communication between adults.
- Make future goals for yourself and your child. Your child needs to hear how long they are expected to study for their high school diploma without working to help support the family. They also need to hear what your personal goals are for job advancement, living in your current apartment and neighborhood, making trips "back home," and bringing additional siblings or relatives to join the family.
- Demonstrate confidence by delegating responsibility to your son or daughter whenever possible. Give them the benefit of the doubt as often as possible, as opposed to being overly suspicious. Your worry about what kind of trouble your son or daughter might get into could unintentionally lead them toward those things you fear most if voiced often enough.
- Be a good example of what you want from your child. If at all possible, try to attend adult school in the evenings and make an academic goal for yourself, whether it be to finish a specific level of ESL, to complete the eighth grade or high school diploma, or to attend college. This will say more than any lecture you can give your child about the importance of education.
- Provide a calm atmosphere in which to do homework. A clear table and quiet environment during a consistent time period each evening is absolutely necessary. If this is impossible at home, visits to the local library or staying after school to finish homework before leaving may be other options.
- Attend all school functions. Only through meeting teachers and learning about your child's schedule can you effectively talk with your child about his/her progress in school. Teachers will usually remember parents they have met and may be more helpful if they know you are genuinely involved.
- Ask school staff to help with problems. Each school has a Psychologist, many Counselors, a School Nurse, and numerous Teachers and Administrators who may have valuable suggestions for how to deal with academic, behavior, health or communication problems, as well as advice regarding low-cost community resources.
- Identify and hold up positive examples of individuals who have "made it" in the way you expect of your child. Avoid pointing to failures unless you can point out a corresponding success. Examples should be brought up at specific times to reinforce good effort, not to induce guilt or shame when the child has committed a mistake.
- Expect the same academic success of both boys and girls. Girls in this country are not necessarily going to get married and stay home after graduation and boys may have to leave their pals when studies require it. "Machismo" conflicts with success in many ways.
- Establish routines in your life. Disruptions such as last-minute trips or overnight visitors can break your child's concentration and studies will suffer.
- Stress the importance of reading. If education is important to you, promote it by making interesting reading material available, such as books, magazines, comic books or newspapers in any language. Library cards are usually free or inexpensive and provide limitless access to such materials. Don't push material which your child finds uninteresting, and don't censor without good cause. For example, comic books can be an excellent, non-threatening way to practice reading and should generally be allowed.
- Limit television. Too much television dulls interest in reading and promotes unrealistic attitudes about success in real life. If your child insists upon some electronic entertainment, music with printed words is better than television.
- Review the basics of good discipline: be consistent in your rewards and punishments, be as specific as possible about what behaviors you expect and select rewards and punishments which are appropriate for the act. Become familiar with what works best as a reward and try to rely more on these positive consequences than on punishment or withholding things.
- Recognize and be proud of the broad world perspective you share with your children. As bilingual, bicultural and travelled members of society you hold certain advantages over people who only know the American culture. There are many opportunities to take advantage of these important assets.
- You will not be able to avoid the hardships of raising a teenager. Expect your child to be at times rebellious and at other times to require nurturing, to sometimes behave maturely and at other times do silly things, or to be moody, or occasionally to be predictable and then surprise you with something unexpected. They will reawaken memories of your own experience as a teenager and you will grow in the process. ♦

Bradley Pilon, NCSP, is a bilingual school psychologist at Belmont High School in Los Angeles, where he works with the Newcomer Center.

Recomendaciones Para Los Padres De Alumnos Recien Llegados:

Como Ayudar al Adolescente Inmigrante a Acostumbrarse en su Primer Año

por Bradley Pilon

- Pase tiempo a solas con su hijo(a). No se puede sustituir ese tiempo a solas con otras actividades, y excursiones familiares no cuentan. Esto es aún más necesario en el caso del hijo que está reunificándose con sus padres después de una larga separación.
- Tome el tiempo necesario para que su hijo(a) le cuente los acontecimientos tal como ocurrieron durante la separación. Muchos jóvenes son poco dispuestos a contar las cosas malas que les pasaron creyendo que así protegen a sus padres de la verdad, pero al mismo tiempo se quedan con el resentimiento de que sus padres no estaban cuando necesitaban su protección. Aunque muchos dicen que entienden la necesidad de separarse para inmigrar a la familia, siempre necesitan ser reasegurados verbalmente para olvidar sus sentimientos de abandono, incluso los que aparentan ser muy lógicos o maduros.
- Acuérdense que el dinero no equivale al amor. El hecho de que podría haber costado mucho traer a la familia a este país no significa que el/la hijo(a) se siente más querido como resultado. Tanto los adultos como los niños necesitan sentir el cariño aparte de la discusión de dinero.
- Mantenga los detalles íntimos de su vida privados. Los niños no necesitan la responsabilidad de estar enterados sobre las dificultades en el matrimonio, pasadas o presentes, y podrían sentirse o culpables o agobiados si han tomado un lado u otro. Al mismo tiempo, muchos jóvenes juzgan a sus padres y sus relaciones, y ésto es parte de criar a un adolescente, pero su opinión no debe, en ningún momento, reemplazar la comunicación directa entre adultos.
- Trace metas tanto para usted como para su hijo(a). Su hijo(a) necesita oir por cuanto tiempo usted quiere que estudie para su diploma sin trabajar para ayudar a la familia. También se beneficiaría de oirle mencionar sus metas personales en cuanto al trabajo, la estancia esperada en su apartamento y vecindad, los viajes de regreso al país natal y fechas posibles de mandar a traer a otros familiares para unir más a la familia.
- Demuestrele la confianza dándole responsabilidades a su hijo(a) lo más posible. Busque lo positivo en vez de esperar lo peor. Sus preocupaciones sobre el tipo de problemas que les podrían llegar podrían guiarlos hacia precisamente lo que usted quiere evitar si son mencionados mucho o en mucho detalle.
- Sea un buen ejemplo de lo que quiere ver en su hijo. Si es posible, trate de asistir a la escuela de adultos en las noches y escoja una meta, ya sea solamente de terminar un cierto nivel de Inglés, terminar su diploma del grado ocho o de high school, o asistir a la universidad. Esto le comunicará más que cualquier consejo que usted le puede dar sobre la importancia de la educación.
- Provea un ambiente tranquilo para hacer tareas: una mesa limpia y silencio sin distracciones durante el mismo período cada noche. Si no se puede en casa, visitas a la biblioteca por la noche u horas de escuela extendidas para terminar con la tarea antes de salir, podrían ser alternativas.
- Asista a todas las funciones escolares. Solo conociendo los maestros, las clases y la rutina de la escuela podrá conversar con su hijo acerca de su progreso en la escuela. Los maestros recordarán a los padres que han conocido y estarán más dispuestos a acomodar cualquier petición especial que tengan.
- Pida ayuda al personal de la escuela con sus problemas. Cada escuela tiene un psicólogo, muchos consejeros, una enfermera y muchos maestros y administradores que pueden brindarles muchos consejos ya sean para solucionar problemas académicos, de comportamiento, de salud o en comunicación. También están al tanto de muchos recursos grátis en la comunidad.
- Identifíque y señale ejemplos positivos de indivíduos que han sobresalido de tal modo que usted espera ver a su hijo(a). Evite indicar los fracasos a menos que puedan nombrar un éxito correspondiente. Estos ejemplos deben ser mencionados en ocasiones específicas para reenforzar el buen esfuerzo, no solo para inculcar vergüenza o culpabilidad cuando el jóven haya cometido un error.
- Exija éxito en la escuela tanto de una hija como de un hijo. Las muchachas que viven en este país no serán necesariamente amas de casa por toda la vida y los muchachos en ocasiones tendrán que escoger entre el estudio y el andar con amigos. "El machismo" interfiere con el éxito en muchas maneras.
- Establezca rutinas en su vida cotidiana. Las interrupciones como viajes improvistos o huéspedes por una noche interrumpen la concentración de su hijo(a) y los estudios pueden sufrir.
- Enfatice la importancia de la lectura. Si le importa mucho la educación, promuévala con proveer materiales interesantes para leer, tal como los libros, las revistas, las revistas de historietas ilustradas y los periódicos — en cualquier idioma. El precio actual de las tarjetas de biblioteca en Los Angeles es de cincuenta centavos y ofrece acceso sin límites a muchos materiales. No le presione a su hijo(a) con materiales que no le parecen interesantes, y no le censure sin buen motivo. Por ejemplo, las historietas pueden representar una excelente fuente de práctica para la lectura y se le deben permitir.
- Ponga restricciones al uso de la televisión porque en exceso les impide la curiosidad natural e inculca ideas no realistas sobre el trabajo y la superación en el mundo real. Si su hijo(a) insiste en acudir al entretenimiento electrónico, más vale la música con su letra impresa que la televisión.
- Repase los principios de la disciplina eficaz: Sea consistente en sus premios y castigos, sea lo más específico posible sobre la conducta que usted espera ver y escójales premios y castigos que sean los más apropiados al comportamiento. Aprenda las consecuencias positivas que motivan más y trate de usar éstas, en vez de las negativas o el negársele lo que le gusta.
- Esté consciente y orgulloso de la amplia perspectiva mundial que usted comparte con su hijo(a). Como personas bilingues-

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Innovative Practice

Training For Parents of Immigrant Teens at Los Angeles Unified's Newcomer Center

By Bradley Pilon

Immigrant teenagers face adjustments which magnify the struggles of normal adolescence. At the same time that most are going through adolescent rebellion, they are also in the process of reacquainting with parents who are virtual strangers to them. Culture shock, a new language and a different educational system further compound the challenge of starting life in this country. In response to this situation, Los Angeles Unified School District's Newcomer High School Program is designed to support and motivate newly-arrived immigrants towards success as valuable bilingual, bicultural members of society.

As the School Psychologist responsible for addressing the counseling needs of these students, I have found my link to parents to be as vital as my interventions with the students themselves. Many immigrant parents lack the appropriate authority with their children because they are unfamiliar with this country's schools and American culture in general. In addition, most are recently reunited with children they have not seen for years. These parents are highly motivated to re-establish influence over their children and thereby guide them towards the better life they believe this country holds for them.

The typical immigrant teenager complains of boredom. It's too early to have friends, and American culture, particularly in Los Angeles, does not include the street life and neighborliness which exist in other countries. More important, violence and lack of money for safe recreational activities force young people indoors. This lack of diversion can compound already existing family tensions.

As mentioned, most Newcomer students are becoming reacquainted with parents who left them to be raised by relatives while they became established in this country. Typically the parent is a single mother who has remarried and had other children, making it more difficult for the newcomer to overcome old feelings of abandonment. As a result, many immigrant students consider that they are only living in the United States for a trial period until it becomes clear whether they will be able to re-bond with their parent(s). Far from understanding this, many parents expect gratitude for their sacrifices in starting a new life and reuniting the family in a new country. They are unprepared for the difficult parental tasks ahead.

Newcomer parents need to hear that they are not alone in their struggles, and school meetings can provide an excellent opportunity for them to hear from others who are going through similar family adjustments. In addition, guest speakers who address specific immigrant issues can bring great relief to parents as they describe typical immigrant teenage reactions and behaviors which these parents thought were unique to their own children. Structured presentations with extended periods for questions and comments have proven to be the most effective format for such meetings.

The traditional respect for educators which most parents bring from foreign countries is particularly conducive to guest-speaker presentations, as opposed to informal agendas which require personal initiative or unstructured sharing. "Effective Discipline," "Understanding Gangs," "Improving Family Communication," "American Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Laws," "Cultural Adjustment in the United States," and "Understanding Teenagers" are some of the topics which have been covered at the parents' request. They are generally interested in either basic parenting skills or immigrant issues. Throughout these meetings, certain questions come up repeatedly. In response to their questions, a list of recommendations was developed in a handout format (see English version and Spanish translation). The issues are organized in order of primary importance for parents who want to build a trusting relationship with their teenage son or daughter.

Parenting practices outside the United States are much stricter than in this country in that they often place a strong emphasis on punishment, including hitting, and do not include the dialoguing practiced by American parents. This does not necessarily mean that Newcomer parents are opposed to raising their children according to this country's prevalent behavioristic philosophy, but they do require clear explanations of how it functions and evidence that it can work.

Parents become convinced that more positive reinforcement and less punishment might be a good thing when they reflect on their own experiences as children. While most feel that being hit probably didn't do irreparable damage, they also agree that they would have had better relationships with their parents had the ever-present threat of severe punishment not existed. By putting themselves in the role of the teenager in this way, immigrant parents are able to uncover the origins of their own barriers in communicating with their children. In fact, this process of re-examining one's own childhood has proven to be particularly valuable in providing insights for many groups of parents. In the case of the immigrant parent, it can be an inspiring journey across both generations and cultures. ♦

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■ Recomendaciones ... *from page 13*

biculturales y que han viajado, ustedes disfrutan de ciertas ventajas comparado con personas que solo conocen la cultura Americana. Hay muchas oportunidades para aprovecharse de estas ventajas.

- No hay manera de evitar las dificultades de criar a un adolescente. A veces se portarán rebeldes mientras en otras ocasiones querrán que se les consienta; a veces demuestran madurez y de repente cometen tonterías; pueden estar sentimentales; o vacilan entre predicibles y caprichosos. Despiertan memorias en uno de su propia adolescencia y le inducirán a crecer como persona en el proceso. ♦

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Attachment
A Handout for Teachers

by Nicole Bayer, Gail Citowitz, and Cheryl King, University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee

Background Information

What Is Attachment and Why Is It Important? Attachment is the emotional relationship that bonds two individuals together. This bond persists through time and serves to maintain proximity and physical contact. It is a lasting tie that draws the two individuals to each other. Attachment is originally formed over many weeks and months through social interactions between infants and caregivers, and is necessary for a stable caregiver/child relationship to grow. Attachment is essential for physical survival of the baby, and allows him or her to develop trust in others and reliance on him/herself. The cycle of bonding begins when the infant signals his or her needs to the caregiver by crying, smiling, or vocalizing. When caregivers respond to these needs, the infant develops trust in the caregiver and the environment. When this cycle is consistently interrupted, attachment will not occur. Infants learn whether the world is giving and satisfying or whether it is frustrating and hostile from these early interactions.

What Happens If Attachment Does Not Occur? Unattached individuals lack the ability to make and maintain human bonds. They move through life devoid of the human emotions necessary to find love and happiness. They are incapable of attaching to anyone and use people to get what they want. They lack a conscience and have no genuine guilt or remorse for wrong doing.

Difficulties in attachment range from slightly unattached to extremely unattached. The more unattached a person is, the more difficulty s/he will have functioning in society and the more warning signs they will exhibit.

Attachment Difficulties: Who is at Risk?

- Children of divorce, when visitation does not meet their emotional or developmental needs
- Children who experience inconsistent or inadequate childcare
- Children who have had a prolonged separation from a primary caregiver during infancy (i.e. long term hospitalization, death of a parent)
- Children who have been placed in multiple foster homes
- Adopted children who have experienced prolonged delays prior to permanent placement
- Children who have been abused
- Children of teenage parents
- Children of parents who exhibit psychopathology and/or abuse drugs and alcohol
- Children raised in impoverished homes which lack sufficient stimulation
- Children who are reported to be "difficult" as infants
- Children who are born prematurely
- Children with central nervous system disorders
- Children who experience inconsistent punishment from parents

Attachment Difficulties: Warning Signs All children may exhibit some of these characteristics at one time or another, but the unattached child displays a number of these behaviors at a higher frequency:

- Inability to give and receive affection
- Self injurious behavior (i.e., bites, hits, or scratches self)
- Cruelty to others or to pets
- Phoniness, insincerity
- Stealing, hoarding, and gorging
- Speech pathology—especially "baby talk"
- Severe control problems, intolerant of adult authority
- Poor impulse control—especially in area of aggression
- Inability to maintain long-term childhood friendships
- Poor eye contact except when angry or manipulative
- Fascination with blood, fire, and gore
- Learning disorders due to actual skill deficits or refusal to learn
- Blatant and consistent lying

What Can I do as a Teacher? As a teacher, you may be the one consistent, responsive adult in a poorly attached child's life with whom a bond can be created. Mutual trust and respect are essential to build a relationship that fosters attachment and self-esteem. Research shows that intervention is most effective when initiated before age seven. However success is possible in later childhood, although attachment is more difficult to achieve.

Suggestions for developing a well-bonded relationship with a child you suspect may be poorly attached:

- Become informed about attachment related problems and issues
- Enlist the support of others, including the school psychologist

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Attachment

A Handout for Parents

by Nicole Bayer, Gail Citowitz, and Cheryl King, University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee

Background Information

What Is Attachment and Why Is It Important? Attachment is the emotional relationship that bonds two individuals together. This bond persists over time and serves to maintain closeness and physical contact. It is a lasting tie that draws the two individuals to each other. Attachment is originally formed over many weeks and months through social interactions between infants and caregivers, and is necessary for a stable caregiver/child relationship to grow. Attachment is essential for physical survival of the baby, and allows him or her to develop trust in others and reliance on him/herself. The cycle of bonding begins when the infant signals his or her needs to the caregiver by crying, smiling, or vocalizing. When caregivers respond to these needs, the infant develops trust in the caregiver and the environment. When this cycle is consistently interrupted, secure attachment will not occur. Infants learn whether the world is giving and satisfying or whether it is frustrating and hostile from these early interactions.

What Happens If Attachment Does Not Occur? Unattached individuals lack the ability to make and maintain human bonds. They move through life without the human emotions necessary to find love and happiness. They are incapable of attaching to anyone and use people to get what they want. They lack a conscience and have no genuine guilt or remorse for wrong doing.

Difficulties in attachment range from slightly unattached to extremely unattached. The more unattached a person is, the more difficulty s/he will have functioning in society and the more warning signs they will exhibit.

Attachment Difficulties: Warning Signs All infants or children may exhibit some of these characteristics at one time or another, but the unattached infant or child displays a number of these behaviors at a higher frequency:

Infants

- Weak crying response or consistent whining
- Very resistant to holding and cuddling, poor clinging
- Avoids eye contact

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■ Attachment: Teachers... *from page 15*

- Recognize when a child's problems are outside of your realm of expertise, and refer to appropriate sources when necessary
- Set realistic goals and limits for the child
- Encourage the child's strengths to foster healthy, positive self-esteem
- Allow the child to make decisions and choices in non-threatening situations, and to experience the resulting consequences
- Reinforce positive efforts the child makes
- Use "I" messages when confronting negative behavior (e.g., "I feel angry when you hit other children.")
- Use time-out from reinforcement for negative behavior. Once child is behaving, provide affection and social praise
- Focus on what the child got *correct* on school work and then discuss why he got those items right—suggest it is because he tried harder or is getting better at the subject
- Set aside a few minutes each day to give the child your complete attention. Listen and pay attention to what is on the child's mind
- Model good eye contact and encourage the child to make eye contact
- Give at least one genuine personal compliment per day (more is preferable)
- Focus on the child's strengths and successes rather than shortcomings
- Be confident and positive; approach this undertaking with a "can-do" attitude
- Most of all, be patient and do not give up; although success may take some time, it can happen if you are persistent
- Connect the child with a school volunteer

These strategies can also be used as a preventative measure for children known to have some of the risk factors listed above. ♦

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■ Attachment: Parents... *from page 16*

- Poor sucking response
- Lacks reciprocal smile response, resists smiling
- Is passive and lifeless, doesn't respond to people

Children

- Inability to give and receive affection
- Self injurious behavior (i.e., bites, hits, or scratches self)
- Cruelty to others or to pets
- Phoniness, insincerity
- Stealing, hoarding, and gorging
- Speech problems—especially "baby talk"
- Severe control problems, intolerance of adult authority
- Poor impulse control—especially in area of aggression
- Inability to maintain long-term childhood friends
- Poor eye contact except when angry or manipulative
- Preoccupation with blood, fire, and gore
- Learning disorders due to actual skill deficits or refusal to learn
- Blatant and consistent lying

What Can Parents Do To Encourage Attachment?

- Create and maintain a stable environment and routine for your baby
- Show interest in your infant, play with him or her
- Hold and caress your baby, give loving touches and/or massages
- Gently rock your baby with slow rhythmic movements
- Have face to face contact, establish eye contact, and smile
- Provide stimulation and the opportunity for your infant to observe and interact with others
- Provide proper and preventative medical care
- Enjoy time spent with your baby, engage in activities that are stimulating for both you and your baby
- Make sure day care facilities you use are adequately staffed and nurturing towards children

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What Are Some Behaviors Parents Should Avoid?

- Overstimulation, too much touching or talking
- Leaving baby, when awake, in isolation for long periods of time
- Responding in anticipation of baby's needs before these needs are expressed
- Responding inconsistently to needs expressed by baby
- Irregular and punitive discipline
- Use of inconsistent and/or nonresponsive caregivers

Where To Go For Help, Support, or Information

If you have concerns about the quality of attachment between you and your child, call:

- Local school district's school psychologist
- Local Mental Health Association
- Local crisis hotline
- Community church
- Support groups for parents in crisis or experiencing stress—call your local crisis hotline for locations in your area:

  Parents Anonymous Support Group
  Parents Without Partners Support Group
  Tough Love Support Group

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Homework Survival Guide: A Parent Handout

by Peg Dawson

A Place to Work

1. *Find the right place.*

In some families, having a central location where all children in the family do their homework works best. This may be the dining room or kitchen table. In other families, each child has her own study place, usually at a desk in the bedroom. What works for you depends on your children. Some kids do best under the watchful eye of a parent in which case the dining room or kitchen may work best. Others need the quiet of their bedrooms to avoid distractions. Some kids like to work with the radio on (and this helps them focus), while other do worse with this kind of background noise. Think about possible distractions that will need to be avoided (a nearby television, the telephone, etc.) when planning your child's workspace.

You may want to conduct "experiments" with your child to determine what setting works best under what circumstances. Try several options for a week to see how your child does (rate the quality of the homework completed, the time it took to finish, and the child's subjective reaction).

2. *Gather necessary materials.*

Youngsters can waste a lot of time tracking down things like pencils, paper, rulers, etc. when beginning their homework. To avoid this, stock your child's study area with these materials and any other he is likely to need, such as a dictionary, highlighters, pens, scissors, glue, tape, colored pencils, stapler and staples, etc.

It may also be helpful to set up file folders for each subject your child is taking in school to keep track of necessary papers, such as long-term assignment directions, tests and homework that have been passed back (to help in studying for the next test), etc. These folders should *not* be used for storing homework, since your child is likely to leave it at home and forget to take it to school. Completed homework should be placed in the child's backpack, trapper keeper, or notebook as soon as it is finished to ensure it gets to school.

A plastic bin may be an ideal place to store study materials; if you have more than one child, you may want to have one bin for each child. The advantage to this is that these are portable — just in case you have a child whose preferred study style is to work in a different place each night!

You may also want to have a second container (such as a dishpan) which your child can "dump" their school things in as soon as they get home from school. This will help avoid last minute frantic searches for permission slips, library books, messages from the principal, notices of meetings, etc.

Organizing Homework/Setting Priorities

A homework session should begin by reviewing what the day's assignments are. It is probably a good idea to draw up a list of assignments on a separate sheet of paper, so that you can then help your child prioritize and break down longer tasks into shorter ones. The steps to follow might be:

1. List out assignments.
2. Make sure the child brought home the necessary books, worksheets, etc.
3. Break tasks into subtasks.
4. Check to see what other tasks the child has to do which should be included on the list — including long-term assignments, and tests later in the week for which the child should begin studying. Add these to the homework list.
5. Have the child decide what order she will complete the work. A good rule of thumb is to have the child begin and end with assignments she considers "easy," sandwiching more difficult assignments in between.
6. Estimate how much time it will take to complete the work.
7. Make sure you have allowed enough time for the child to complete all his homework, allowing for break time as necessary.

Sometimes it is difficult for kids to complete homework because of other obligations they may have — sports events, doctors' appointments, scout meetings, chores, family events, etc. You may find it helpful to put together a weekly calendar to keep track of these activities. A sample of such a weekly calendar is contained in Appendix A. Once a week (Sunday sounds good), sit down with your child and fill out the weekly calendar together. Then, as you plan your homework time each day, you can reference this calendar to allow time for the other activities your child is involved with.

Getting Started

As mentioned above, it is usually best to have children begin with a task that they consider "easy." Some children may want to start with the hardest task first to get it over with, and this is acceptable unless the child has a very difficult time getting started and will dawdle or avoid the difficult assignment even though it was his/her choice to start with it.

For many youngsters, just getting started on homework seems like an insurmountable obstacle. We have several suggestions for handling this problem:

1. Have the child specify exactly *when* she will begin her homework and then reward her for getting to work within five minutes of the time she has specified (see the section on Incentive Systems for more information about this).
2. Sit with your child for the first five minutes to make sure he gets off to a good start.
3. Talk with your child about her assignments before beginning. This is particularly important for written language assignments or more open-ended tasks. Children often need to be "primed" or activated for the best efforts to come out. This is particularly true for youngsters who may have difficulties with verbal fluency or word retrieval.
4. Orient your child to his assignment; walk him through the first one or two problems or items to make sure he understands what he is supposed to do.
5. Build in a short break relatively quickly, if getting started is a problem.

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■ Homework Survival Guide... *from page 18*

Getting Through It

Make sure adequate breaks are built in. Many children have a great deal of difficulty working for long stretches of time on homework without a break. Better to plan for a two-hour homework session with frequent breaks built in than to try to cram homework into a one-hour, non-stop session. You can use a kitchen timer to keep breaks to a reasonable length (e.g., 5-10 minutes). Breaks might be used to get a snack, play a few minutes of a Nintendo game, or to shoot baskets or do some other form of exercise. Breaks should be scheduled when tasks get accomplished rather than after a set period of time, otherwise your child can daydream the time away and still get a break.

One child we know arranges homework sessions between TV shows he likes to watch. Thus, his schedule on any given day might look like this:

4:30	Math	6:30	Social studies
5:00	TV show	7:00	TV show
5:30	English	8:00	Science
6:00	Dinner	8:30	TV show

If he hasn't finished whatever task he was working on when his television program comes on, he either misses the program or tapes it to watch at a later time.

Other suggestions for getting through homework:

1. Make a game out of work completion: have the child estimate how long it will take to complete an assignment, have her "place bets," set a kitchen timer where the child can't see how much time it was set for and challenge her to "beat the clock," or use a stopwatch to see how quickly she can do an assignment, one math problem, etc.
2. If a task takes longer than your child can sustain (even if it's broken down into smaller steps), or if he "gets stuck," have him switch to another assignment rather than stop working altogether.
3. Use a "beep tape" to help him stay focused. This is an audio tape which sounds an electronic tone at random intervals. When the child hears the tone, she is to ask herself, "Was I paying attention?" She can be given a form to fill out to accompany the tape. This has been quite effective with children who daydream or who get pulled off task easily, often without even realizing it. The tone brings them back to task. Alternatively, some parents make "nag tapes" where they tape messages at random intervals, again to prompt the child back to task.

Long Term Assignments

These are often the hardest homework assignments for youngsters to keep track of and to complete.

1. ***Know what assignments are due when.***

In addition to having a weekly assignment book where daily homework is recorded, it is also advisable to have a monthly calendar on which long-term assignments can be written as soon as they are assigned. With younger or more disorganized students, parents may want to periodically send in this calendar and ask the classroom teacher to verify that it is up-to-date. Older students should be able to keep these themselves, transferring items as necessary from their weekly assignment book.

2. ***Break long-term assignments into subtasks.***

Sit down with your child and read over directions or discuss the nature of the long-term assignment. Make out a list of the steps necessary to complete the assignment. If desired, this can be a fairly lengthy outline with notes attached providing more guidance about what is to be included for each step. For written reports, for instance, the steps might include taking notes, generating an outline, writing the introduction, the sections of the report and the summary, preparing a bibliography, drawing any necessary maps and charts, proofreading, preparing the final draft, and making a cover.

3. ***Draw up a timeline.***

Once the outline is developed, each subtask should then have a due date attached to it and should be written on the monthly calendar. An example of this is included in Appendix A.

Care should be taken to ensure adequate time is available for each step. A long report will require that more time be devoted to each step, particularly preparing the final draft and proofreading. If the long-term assignment requires that your child use the library, visit a museum, or gather information from outside sources, include these trips in the timeline, with dates attached. If materials need to be purchased, the time when this will happen should also be identified.

In the beginning, your child will probably need extensive help breaking down his assignments and developing a realistic timeline. As time goes on, he can assume increasing amounts of responsibility for these. Time management is a skill of life-long importance. Developing increasing independence in planning for and executing long-term assignments is an early opportunity for a child to acquire this valuable skill.

Incentive Systems

For many youngsters, homework is an exceedingly difficult task representing an ordeal they perceive at times to be insurmountable. For these children, all the organization and planning in the world may not be enough to get them through the daily grind of homework. In this case, an incentive system may need to be put in place to make homework completion a more attractive task for them.

If this is the right approach for your child, we recommend a system whereby your child can earn points for completing tasks or for demonstrating other appropriate behaviors required for successful homework completion. The points can then be traded-in for daily, weekly, or long-term reinforcers. Steps involved in setting up a point system include:

1. With your child, draw up a list of privileges or rewards your child would like to earn. Daily rewards might include an extra half hour of television, a special snack, the chance to stay up an extra half hour before bed. Weekly rewards might include a trip to the mall or McDonald's, or the chance to go to a video arcade or rent a video. Longer term rewards might be going to a movie with a friend, inviting a friend over for the night, or the chance to buy a small toy.

2. Now, again with your child, draw up a list of "jobs" for which your child can earn points. Related to homework, such jobs might include:
   - Writing down homework assignments,

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■ Homework Survival Guide... *from page 19*

- Bringing home necessary homework materials.
- Getting homework started on time.
- Completing work within the specified homework time.
- Finishing homework without reminders (nags) from parents.
- Finishing homework without constant parental supervision or assistance.
- Completing work with an acceptable standard of accuracy.
- Proofreading written work/checking math problems.
- Handing in homework completed and on time.
- Successfully solving homework problems (e.g., calling friends or teacher when an assignment is not understood, knowing what to do when books or other necessary papers were left at school, discussing homework problems with the teacher or going to the teacher for extra help).

3. Decide how many points each of the homework "jobs" can earn and how much each of the privileges or rewards will cost. To determine how much the rewards should cost, add up the number of points you feel your child will earn each day. Be sure that your child has about one third of her points free to save up for special privileges.
4. Get a notebook, and set it up with five columns, one each for the date, the item, deposits, withdrawals, and the running balance.
5. Once a month or so, review the list of jobs and privileges and revise as necessary.

Described above is a fairly elaborate system that may be necessary with those children who are highly resistant to doing homework. Samples of two homework reward systems are included in Appendix B. When the problem is not considered to be so extreme, a more informal system (such as the opportunity to earn a small reward after all the homework is done each day) may be all that is necessary. Children can also be taught to reward themselves as they complete tasks, both major and minor ones. they can also adjust the reward depending on the size or difficulty of the task: half an hour of reading is worth a 10-minute break to shoot baskets; completing a term paper is worth a bike ride to the store to buy a favorite snack.

With some children, the use of natural or logical consequences alone may be sufficient. Not being able to watch a favorite TV program because the homework wasn't done in time is a logical consequence that arises from dawdling over assignments. For some children, a failing grade is a natural consequence for failure to complete homework, and this alone will be sufficient to induce them to work. However, it has been our experience that parents should not assume that fear of a failing grade alone will be sufficient to induce their child to do his homework.

Parents should resist the temptation simply to punish children for their failure to do homework. While it may make sense to cut down on the number of outside activities or the amount of time their child is allowed to play with friends after school in order to allow for sufficient time to do homework, a system in which incentives are built in for homework completion will likely be more effective than a system of negative consequences alone. Most children who have problems doing homework are not happy about their situation or the fights they draw their parents into. Rather, it seems to take these children considerably more effort to get down to work and to sustain attention to homework than it does the average child. For this reason, it makes sense to reward them for the extra effort it takes.

Parent Role: Help or Supervise?

Many parents, particularly those of children who may be struggling in school, wrestle with the question of how much help they should give their children on homework. The following suggestions are offered:

1. It is a good idea for parents to discuss with their children the nature of the assignment, to make sure they understand what they are supposed to do, and to guide them as they do the first one or two items of an assignment. Parents should not have to remain by their children's side throughout the entire session. If your child seems to require this, then you should probably build in an incentive for working independently to wean your child of reliance on you for support or assistance. Setting the kitchen timer and telling your child to wait until it rings to show you her work or to ask questions is one way to gradually increase independence.
2. Parents may want to review homework assignments to check for either neatness or accuracy. If the handwriting is illegible (and your child is capable of writing more neatly without an inordinate amount of effort), it is acceptable to ask him to rewrite the assignment. If your child is ready to learn to proofread or to check for mistakes himself, you may want to hand back a paper back with a comment such as, "I found three mistakes on your math page," or "Please look for spelling errors." If he's not ready for this, point to the specific mistakes and ask him to correct them (without giving him the correct answer).
3. Parents should keep in mind the overall purpose of homework: to give children independent practice with a skill they have already been taught. Parents should not have to teach the skills necessary for their children to complete their homework successfully. A good rule of thumb is that children should be able to get at lest 70 percent of a homework assignment correct working *on their own* for it to be within an appropriate instructional range. If your child cannot achieve that level of success without a great deal of support from you, then the homework she is being assigned is probably inappropriate. Make an appointment with your child's teacher to ask for assignments that will better give her the practice she needs.
4. You may also want to talk to the teacher if your child appears to be spending an inordinate amount of time on homework even though he is successful at it. Ask the teacher how much time a child should be spending on homework, and if you child is working much more than that, ask for an adjustment in workload, such as reduced assignments. ♦

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Appendix A: Organization Aids

Weekly Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Assign-ments							
Chores							
Activities							
Other							

Sample Calendar for Planning Long-term Assignments

APRIL						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Good Friday	2
3 Easter	4 Choose topic for report	5 Find books at library	6 Take notes	7 Take notes	8	9 Make outline
10	11 Write introduction	12	13 DRAFT: write 1st half of report	14 DRAFT: write 2nd half of report	15	16 Make charts, maps and cover
17	18 Make bibliography	19 Revise report	20 Do final draft	21 Proof final draft	22	23 Make final corrections
24	25 Report due	26	27	28	29	30

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Appendix B: Homework Contracts

Sample Homework Contract I

Terms of Contract:

1. John will write down all assignments in assignment book.
2. The daily TV schedule will be:
   a. John can watch Batman at 5 o'clock.
   b. In order to watch any evening TV shows, homework will be completed.
   c. If homework isn't done, we will tape shows for later viewing.
3. John will not be allowed to play video games during the week unless all his homework is done. He can play no more than one hour per day at any time (including weekends).
4. On Fridays, John will have teachers sign a sheet indicating he has turned in all homework assignments for the week.

Points can be earned for:	***Point Value***
1. Handing in all homework assignments for all classes each week	5
2. Grade of B or better on quizzes or tests	3
3. Grade of B or better on a report or project	5
4. Grade of B or better on report card (academic subjects)	5

Points can be traded for:

1. A contribution to the Super Nintendo fund — $30	120

Sample Homework Contract II

Daily Homework Tasks	***Points***
All assignments written down	1
All materials brought home	1
Finish homework by 9 PM	1

Privileges	***Cost***
DAILY	
Extra half hour TV show	3
Extra snack	3
Practice soccer with dad	3
15 minutes video game time	3
WEEKLY	
Rent a video game	12
Rent a movie	12
Have a friend sleep over	12
Go to Friendly's for ice cream	15
LONG TERM	
Eat at a Chinese restaurant	75
Take a friend to a movie	75
Go bowling	75
Earn a new cassette tape	75

POINT TRACKING SHEET

Date	*Item*	*Deposit*	*Withdrawal*	*Account Balance*

A School–Wide Social Skills Program: Parent Training

by Candace Cartwright Dee, Susan M. Sheridan, and Robert N. Jones

This article is the last in a series of five articles detailing the design and implementation of a school–wide social skills program conducted at Midvale Elementary School in Sandy, Utah. The purpose of this article is to describe the parent training component of the project.

The Midvale Social Skills project, affectionately known as "The M.A.R.I.O. Program," has been described in detail in recent *Communique* articles (see February, March, May and June, 1995). Therefore, only a brief review is presented here. The project began as a school–wide social skills intervention for students considered at–risk due to family demographics and deficient social problem–solving abilities. Interventions included (a) classroom instruction and practice for all students; (b) a school–wide reinforcement system (My Actions aRe In Order – M.A.R.I.O.) to encourage the use of social skills in all aspects of school life; (c) a structured recess program (Learning and Understanding Important Getting–along Ideas – L.U.I.G.I.) to provide a framework for the practice of social problem– solving; and (d) a problem–solving diversion class (PSDC) for students who demonstrated antisocial behaviors during recess or were unsuccessful in their attempts to use social problem–solving skills.

Although the majority of students obtained positive effects from the school–wide social skills intervention package, there were several students who were repeatedly referred to the diversion class for arguing, fighting and failure to comply with school rules. Because these students failed to generalize skills learned through various social skills interventions and support programs, a combined small group parent training treatment approach was initiated. This intensive combined approach is the subject of this last article on the Midvale project.

The parents of students with more than two referrals to the problem–solving diversion class were invited to attend an eight–week parent training class. The parents were asked to bring their child with them to the class sessions. Four school psychologists from the local school district, including the Midvale Elementary school psychologist, were recruited by the project directors to participate in this parent training. Two were assigned to the parent group and two to the student group. The 90–minute sessions were held one evening per week for eight weeks at the school.

Each week the session began as a combined parent and student group. Homework successes, failures and attempts were discussed by both parents and students and the evening's format was presented. Parents were encouraged to provide feedback on their progress as well as on the progress of their children. Students were encouraged to provide feedback on their own progress and the progress of their parents. When everyone had an opportunity to share, the parents were excused to proceed to a separate room.

Parent training involved two types of skills, social facilitation skills and behavioral parenting skills. The social facilitation skills were selected by the school psychologists to compliment the social problem–solving skills taught to the children in the school–wide program. The facilitation skills included reinforcement, debriefing, problem–solving, goal setting and transferring. (See "Social Facilitation Skills" below.) The skills were taken from a parent training manual (Sheridan & Dee, 1993) entitled, *Helping Parents Help Kids: A Manual for Helping Parents Deal with Children's Social Difficulties.*

The behavioral parenting skills were solicited from the parents in a needs assessment discussion on the first night of the group. Parents requested information about establishing household rules and consequences time–out procedures, chores, compliance, and talking back. The school psychologists conducting the parent training sessions translated these identified needs into discussions of: (1) establishing rules, consequences, and reinforcement; (2) time–out procedures; (3) precision commands; and (4) tracking systems. These skills were adapted from various sources including *SOS! Help for Parents* (Clark, 1985) and *What, Me Worry? Practical Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems* (Jenson, Rhode, & Reavis, in press). A description of some of these skills is provided at the end of this article. A schedule of topics was established with one social facilitation skill and one behavioral parent skill presented every one to two weeks.

The parent–only group began each week with feedback and discussion on issues presented during the homework review with the students. The social facilitation skill was presented next. A rationale for each social facilitation skill was provided as an introduction to the skill. The skill steps were reviewed and modeled either by the school psychologists or via a prepared video. The parents were then asked, on a volunteer basis, to practice the skill with one of the school psychologists. One school psychologist took the role of the child while the other school psychologist provided cues and feedback for the parent. After practicing with the school psychologist, parents were asked to practice with each other. The school psychologists provided feedback and reinforcement for the parents during the practice part of the session. A 5–10 minute break usually followed the practice session.

After the break, the behavioral parenting skill selected for the week was presented and discussed. The skill was introduced by asking parents to discuss difficult parenting situations relevant to the skill. The school psychologists presented the behavioral technique as a possible solution to the scenario described by the parent. Again, after watching the school psychologists model the technique, parents were asked to role play, with each other, a situation using the behavioral technique.

At the end of each parent–only session, parents were given several homework assignments. They were provided with reading material (Sheridan & Dee, 1993) on the next week's social facilitation skill. In addition, they were asked to practice the present skill at home with their child at least two times and prepare to discuss their attempts in class the following week. Finally, parents were asked to practice or initiate the behavioral parenting skill of the week. This included activities such as setting up a reinforcement system at home, establishing 4–5 family rules with positive and negative consequences, establishing family meetings, and other skills.

Before concluding, the school psychologists reviewed with the parents the skill that had been presented to the students in their session. Parents were asked to use their facilitation skills to encourage their child to use the social skill they learned in appropriate activities throughout the week.

Parents and children were reunited during the final fifteen minutes of each session with the purpose of practicing together the skills

parents and children had just learned. The school psychologists presented the guidelines for the final parent–child interaction of the evening. The activity varied, depending on the skills each group had learned during the session. Sometimes students were asked to use a skill they had learned to approach their parent on a sensitive subject. Parents practiced the skills they had learned to respond to the student. For example, students were given the task of approaching their parents about an increase in allowance. They followed the steps of picking the best time, asking if this was a good time, providing a rationale, and making the request. Parents were encouraged to use debriefing and problem–solving steps to respond to and negotiate the allowance.

Other times, the parents were the initiators of the interaction and the students were expected to respond using their learned skills. In this example, a parent might use the skill of debriefing to ask the child about a social event in which the child had been involved. The students were encouraged to use Body Basics (proper eye contact, voice tone, body posture, etc.) to discuss the situation with their parent. The school psychologists circled the room providing feedback and reinforcement to the dyads. Parent and child homework was reviewed one last time and rewards offered for all participants before the group adjourned for the week.

Throughout this intervention, the school psychologists attempted to model the skills they were teaching to parents and students in the group sessions. A reinforcement system for both parents and students was established to model and teach a home reinforcement system. Joint parent and student group rules were established during the first session, including taking turns talking, arriving on time, respecting other people's comments, and completing homework. Parents and students were given special issue (a unique color) L.U.I.G.I. tickets for compliance with all these rules and for participation in group activities and discussions. At the end of each session, the tickets were pooled into a parent envelope and a student envelope. Two or three names were pulled from the student envelope each week. Students with winning tickets picked from a variety of toy–type prizes. Two or three tickets were also pulled from the parent envelope and parents were awarded a variety of prizes including parenting books, dinner coupons, and movie tickets. Many of these prizes were selected to encourage family activities where social skills were required.

In addition to modeling the reinforcement program, any problems that were presented in the course of the group discussion were resolved through debriefing and problem–solving using the parents' own alternative choices. For example, a parent expressed frustration with his child's use of foul and abusive language. The school psychologist led the parent group through a process of debriefing. All parents contributed to the discussion, sharing their feelings about this behavior in their own children. Debriefing led to a problem–solving dialogue which included (a) suggestions for alternative ways to approach the problem; (b) a discussion of consequences for each alternative choice; and, (c) a hearty discussion regarding which was the "best" solution. The rationale for guiding parents through this process is the hope that they will gain an understanding of what their children experience when the parents are using the debriefing, problem–solving, and goal setting process with them.

Enrollment in the small group–parent training intervention was initially by invitation only (those students with more than two referrals to the problem–solving diversion class). We later opened the class to others, but only referred families attended. Ten families attended the initial session. Eight families attended 80% of the sessions with no session having less than 5 families present. One dedicated student and regular attender came to class and participated two evenings even though his mother was unable to attend. Enrollment/invitation criteria could be altered to meet the needs of individual programs.

The social facilitation skills (Sheridan & Dee, 1993) presented in this parent training intervention have been successful in other schools, with other samples, and in alternative formats. The skills appear to promote the effectiveness of parents as change agents for their child's social skills. Adaptations to the original Sheridan and Dee model were made in this intervention to accommodate the parents' additional need for behavioral parenting techniques and to correspond to the needs of the Midvale Social Skills Program.

This article concludes a five–part *Communique* series on implementing a school–wide social skills program to teach prosocial skills and decrease antisocial and potential gang– related behaviors. In this series we attempted to illustrate the array and complexity of activities in which school psychologists are involved when providing services to students and parents, and their role in designing school–wide skill–training and discipline programs. Throughout this series, we outlined practical program tips, demonstrated how school psychologists can provide important support and leadership to school–wide discipline and prevention activities, and described how they can gather data to evaluate and improve programs and disseminate their results so others may use the programs more efficiently and effectively. This series presented a model of intervention which is effective, cost–efficient, responsive to school needs, and addresses needs in both the school and home environments. ♦

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Thomas Hehir and Federal Panelists Stress Need for School Psych Services

by Kevin Dwyer,
NASP Assistant Executive Director

More than 2000 school psychologists cheered Dr. Thomas Hehir, Director of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) when he recommend that more of their time be spent providing consultation and direct services to students and less time on traditional reevaluations. His keynote speech at NASP's 27th Annual Convention led into a panel of federal leaders on interagency programming. Dr. Hehir spoke of the value of special education law for increasing the functional skills of millions of children who, before P.L. 94-142 (now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]), were prevented from attending public schools. He noted that prior to IDEA, special programs ended at eighth grade and that today over 60% of children with disabilities graduate from high school. More youth with disabilities attend college and more young graduates with disabilities are employed than ever before.

Dr. Hehir did not ignore the problems that remain in the implementation of IDEA, raising the issue that some specialists continue to assume erroneously that categorical labels equate to categorical interventions and placements. He noted that the legalistic process components, although important, should not cloud the importance of looking at results and the goals that all children with disabilities should be educated to the highest standards and included in assessments of school-wide progress. His speech was interrupted several times by spontaneous applause. He urged school psychologists to evaluate programs and not re-label children, and to join with parents to improve comprehensive services for all children, particularly those with emotional and behavioral problems, noting that these children are still too frequently "left to fail."

Dr. Hehir is one of the members of a federal cross-agency group including representation from the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services and Education, in what are called "principle operating components" (POC) within those agencies, to work together on specific issues. The panel at the convention represented the POC for serving the mental health needs of children, and included the additional component of comprehensive school health represented by Dr. Lloyd J. Kolbe, Director of the Division of Adolescent and School Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, represented by Donnie LeBuff, Child and Adolescent Mental Health branch of Public Health, and the Office of Special Education Programs along with the Office of Educational Research and Innovation (OERI) has begun to fund joint research and demonstration projects to provide systems of care for children and families with emotional needs. The model demonstrated that government can work and that red tape and barriers can be removed, stimulating state and local agencies to implement similar needs-based models. Dr. LeBuff noted that her division was responsible for funding the program mentioned by Dr. Mary Arredondo, School Psychologist of the Year, "Cities in Schools" providing a link for services to keep children in school. Information about delinquency prevention funds which may be available to you and your community can be accessed through the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse.

Naomi Karp, a special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Education, noting that school psychologists were her early allies in her teaching, talked about the responsibility of OERI to carry out research and to disseminate best practices nationally. The vision of OERI is divided among themes including: early childhood development and education; students at-risk; students achievement, assessment and curriculum, (which includes equity in testing); life-long learning; and school finance and governance. Research on interagency activities will also be a focus of this office and is the link with the other panelists. The office also oversees the grants for Goals 2000 and the national office for educational statistics which presents the "national report card" on the state of education in the United States. Ms. Karp also is responsible for recruiting families into educational programs, making sure that families are represented at policy levels and as partners in all aspects of education. She mentioned the movie "Hoop Dreams" and Chicago's Cabrini Green housing project to illustrate what happens to the kids who are forced to live in the thousands of housing projects across this nation and the errors of default made in the education of these children. She stated that we take children we call "at-risk" and place them further at risk by miseducating them, "expecting little and demanding less, trapping them in a curriculum which is unchallenging." She warned that there are persons in power who question the premise that all children can and should learn. She noted that OERI is striving to stop "cheating these children" out of real education. She urges that school psychologists join in the research models put forth by the Department of Education. NASP will soon have available through the Internet all OERI proposals, courtesy of Ms. Karp. She invited school psychologists to submit proposals and participate in all OERI competitions. "We don't hear enough from the school psychologists!" She urged NASP members to submit their ideas for priorities and their resumes to become reviewers.

Dr. Kolbe noted that 75% of deaths among teenagers are caused by risky behaviors including traffic accidents, homicides and suicides. He said the most effective way to address this set of problems is through health education and health services in the schools. He noted school counseling and psychological services are critical components of comprehensive school health. He urged that these services must be integrated and that the public health service will continue to support this agenda. He believes that the schools are key in defining what the integrated services model will look like in each community and urged that school psychologists get involved in any local endeavors to implement a health prevention service model. Dr. Kolbe noted that there is a comprehensive health educator in state departments of education and that many are working with health agencies in establishing state plans. These planners need to hear from school psychology state leadership and state school psychology consultants to assure coordinated planning. His office is dedicated to such coordinated efforts.

Several participants continued the dialogue with the panelists through the rest of the morning. One participant, Dr. Joseph Zins of Cincinnati, said, "This was one of the most informative sessions of the convention!" He was impressed by the support for school psychology and the opportunities for supporting child-focused best practices offered by the agency representatives. ♦

Important Numbers:

NASP e-mail (via America OnLine): NASP8455@AOL.COM
Juvenile Justice Clearing House: 1-800-638-8736
OERI General Announcements: 1-800-USA-LEARN

Position Statement

Home-School Collaboration

The National Association of School Psychologists is committed to increasing the academic, behavioral, and social competence of all children and youth. To meet the educational and mental health needs of all students, partnerships between parents and educators are needed. Collaboration between home and school is essential if students are to benefit optimally from the schooling process. Early implementation of home-school partnerships helps to focus efforts toward prevention.

Parents play an important role in school, and research has demonstrated that:

- home environment influences student performance in school;
- parent participation in education is associated with students' positive attitudes and behavior, long-term achievement gains, better attendance, increased completion of school work, higher grades, and improved test scores;
- specific intervention programs have successfully used parents to change their children's academic and behavioral performance;
- family involvement is essential to address specific referral concerns; and
- children achieve more when there is a match between expectations, rules, and interaction styles in the home and school environments.

Educators need to support families, and research has demonstrated that:

- parents want their children to be successful in school, but some parents do not know how to assist their children;
- parents seek guidance from educators;
- parents want to be partners with educators in the education of their children;
- parents' participation in education includes involvement at home and at school; and
- parents' participation increases when they see their participation directly linked to the success of their children.

Societal factors impinge upon children's school performance, including:

- increased cultural diversity;
- increased poverty and unemployment;
- increased drug abuse, crime, and violence; and
- change in the concept of family (e.g., divorce, remarriage, single parenting, extended families, neighbors).

Society is increasingly recognizing that schools cannot meet the educational and socialization needs of all children without the sharing of resources provided by the family and community. The National Association of School Psychologists supports creating collaborative partnerships between parents and educators for the purpose of increasing students' academic, behavioral, and social competence. Collaborative partnerships are characterized by:

- meaningful dialogue and sharing of information;
- mutually agreed upon goals;
- sharing of resources; and
- shared decision-making.

The philosophy of partners working together toward a common goal with shared power characterizes home-school collaboration. Home-school collaboration is an attitude, not an activity and occurs when parents and educators share common goals and responsibilities, and are seen as equals. Effective partnerships recognize that all parent/families have strengths rather than identifying deficits. Effective partnerships between parents and educators have an additive, positive effect on students' performance. Home-school collaboration means that home and school working together can generally accomplish more than either system can accomplish separately. If a collaborative relationship does not exist, educators must continue to support students, and not abdicate their responsibility or blame parents.

NASP encourages school psychologists to take part in national, state, and local efforts to:

- define parent involvement in education to include true partnerships between home, school, and community;
- advocate, with school systems, for increased collaboration between educators and parents regarding the schooling process;
- reach out to all parents and identify strategies to encourage participation by uninvolved parents;
- recognize parents as experts in relationship to their children's behavior;
- avoid labeling families by using an approach which builds on family strengths;
- work with other organizations to promote home-school-community partnerships to increase students' performance in school;
- pursue continuing education on such topics as family interventions, models of home-school collaboration, models of parent education/training, child development and family development, and understanding cultural and ethnic differences;
- develop parent involvement programs that provide parents with options to be meaningfully involved and are sensitive to individual parents' needs, resources, and time constraints, including those parents who may have been disenfranchised from the school due to their own negative experiences;
- promote communication among families, community, and school personnel to increase students' success in school;
- provide training and support to parents from all cultures on effective strategies for communicating with educators;
- provide training to educators to increase their understanding of culturally and ethnically diverse families;
- develop home-school collaboration programs that facilitate family-school meetings as parents and educators engage in problem solving about individual students;
- provide direct services to parents regarding techniques to promote students' academic and behavioral success in school and the community; and
- consult with parents and teachers to coordinate home and school efforts and serve as a liaison to maintain information exchange and sharing of resources between home, school, and community. ♦

Adopted by the NASP Delegate Assembly, September, 1992.

Position Statement

School Violence

Children and youth are the victims of more crimes than any other age group in the United States today. Violence against children in any setting is disturbing; when it occurs at school, it is especially destructive, and swift action must be taken to ensure the safety of all students and the staff who care for them. The National Association of School Psychologists resolves to help rid America's schools of the destructive influences of violence in all its forms. This can be accomplished through prevention programs, through direct assistance to victims of school violence, through efforts to reduce the incidence of future violence by perpetrators, and through joining other community groups to sponsor anti-violence initiatives.

Violence in schools violates fundamental assumptions that society holds about the role of schooling in the lives of children and youth. When parents leave their sons and daughters at the schoolhouse door each day, they trust that their children will be cared for and safe. When violence occurs at school, this trust is broken in profound and permanent ways. For this reason, NASP believes that schools are rightfully held to a stricter standard than are other segments of society.

School violence threatens the physical, psychological, or emotional well-being of students and school staff. These threats may occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, and they include but are not limited to physical assaults with and without weapons, bullying, and social isolation. To reduce school violence,

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Resolution on Children and Violence in Media and Toys

The Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists recognizes that children observe a large number of violent acts in television programming, videotapes, toys electronic and video games, movies, and cartoons. Research supports that exposure to violence in media and toys can have a negative impact on children's learning and development and can lead to harmful consequences.

Therefore, the Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists resolves to:

a. Inform public policy makers, leaders in media and toy industries, parents educators, school psychologists, and others of research on the potential negative consequences that violence in media and toys may have for children;

b. Support public policies which effectively address children's exposure to violence in media and toys;

c. Promote the development of policies and practices within media and toy industries which effectively address children's exposure to violence;

d. Assist parents, educators, school psychologists, and others with developing effective practices for (1) evaluation and monitoring children's exposure to violence in media and toys and (2) responding to the day-to-day impact that exposure to media and toy violence may have on children;

e. Encourage media and toy industries to produce more developmentally appropriate, non-violent media and toys which can have a positive impact on children's learning and development, and encourage children, parents, and others to consider selection of these media and toys instead of more violent media and toys; and

f. Work collaboratively with other professional and advocacy groups in the implementation of the practices described in this resolution. ♦

National Association of School Psychologists
Executive Board, January, 1994

Resolution on Children, Guns, and Other Weapons

The Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists recognizes that guns and other weapons can—and, unfortunately, often do—hurt children. Guns and other weapons injure and kill thousands of children in the United States each year, through acts of violence and accidents and when the guns and other weapons are used by children and adults. Guns and other weapons may result in psychological harm to children when their family members or friends are injured and killed. The increasing presence of guns and other weapons in schools and communities may create a threatening, hostile, and fearful climate which adversely affects children's psychological development and school learning.

Therefore, the Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists resolves to:

a. Support public policies on gun control which effectively address the potential physical and psychological harm that guns may cause for children;

b. Promote the development of policies and practices within schools and communities which effectively address the potential physical and psychological harm that guns and other weapons may cause for children;

c. Assist policy makers, community leaders, parents, educators, school psychologists, and others with creating safe environments for children and protecting the physical and psychological well-being of children; and

d. Work collaboratively with other professional and advocacy groups in the implementation of the practices described in this resolution. ♦

National Association of School Psychologists
Executive Board, January, 1994

■ School Violence... *from page 28*

schools must ensure that no harm comes to anyone on school campuses at any time. To achieve this goal, efforts must be made to reduce obvious aggressive and illegal behaviors as well as other behaviors that, while not illegal, may damage a student's development and negatively affect school climate.

Creating Safe Schools

Schools must maintain campuses that are safe and conducive to learning. NASP believes that efforts to create safe schools can take many forms. Essential actions include but are not limited to intervening with aggressive students, implementing victim support programs, establishing school-wide violence prevention programs, and improving school climate.

Intervening with aggressive students. As a result of public demands to respond punitively to threats of violence at school through "zero-tolerance" programs, schools often focus disciplinary actions on perpetrators of violence. Policies that focus only on catching and punishing violent behaviors fall far short of the goal of creating a safe school environment. As alternatives to practices such as corporal punishment and ceasing educational services, NASP promotes the use of positive methods of school discipline such as crisis intervention and the application of behavior management principles and strategies. Schools must also make efforts to modify the behavior of students who have engaged or are at risk of engaging in violent behavior. NASP strongly supports systematic efforts to teach social skills and self-control to children and youth as part of a school-wide plan to create a safe and healthy climate conducive to learning.

Implementing victim support programs. Meeting the needs of victims appears self-evident. However, survey data show that most schools respond to antisocial and aggressive behaviors through disciplinary action against the perpetrators, while neglecting to provide appropriate support and counseling for victims. Children who have been the victims of school violence perceive schools as failing to protect them, and as a result they may feel threatened and unsafe while at school. These children display many characteristics common to individuals with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, including blocked learning and symptoms of serious emotional problems. NASP strongly supports the availability of counseling and recovery programs for victims of school violence.

Establishing school-wide violence prevention programs. NASP encourages the implementation of programs designed to teach peacemaking, peer mediation, and conflict resolution. Such programs are natural bridges between interventions that focus on individual change and those seeking to change the ecology of the school at the organizational level.

Improving school climate. A comprehensive program to reduce school violence includes efforts to affect the general climate of the school itself. Such programs may not focus on specific violent behaviors directly but seek to change the conditions that are, directly or indirectly, conducive to violent acts. Individualized instruction and remedial support where needed can reduce academic failure and frustration that may contribute to violence. Programs to decrease racism and other forms of intolerance, increase appreciation of diversity, and improve levels of trust can also decrease violence by creating a climate of acceptance and understanding and by improving the quality of the relationships among and between students and staff.

While school violence may engender a desire to discipline the aggressors harshly, NASP urges school personnel to temper disciplinary responses with efforts to promote cooperation, positive social skills, and peaceful means of resolving conflicts. Addressing school violence must go beyond increasing campus security and establishing procedures to apprehend and punish students who have violated school rules. A comprehensive campaign to end school violence must also encompass efforts to increase support, trust, and caring among students and staff.

Role of the School Psychologist

First and foremost, school psychologists can take a leadership role in encouraging schools to develop a comprehensive approach to violence reduction. School psychologists are trained to a) respond to crises spawned by violence; b) counsel victims; c) implement prevention and intervention programs designed to reduce aggressive behaviors among youths and others; and d) consult with school staff implementing social skills programs and other programs designed to teach peaceful ways to resolve conflicts. These are essential components of a comprehensive school safety plan.

Summary

NASP recognizes that violent acts, wherever they occur, have complex origins and consequences. Efforts to reduce violence at school, therefore, must be multi-faceted. A successful program will ensure the ongoing safety of all students and staff both by creating conditions that discourage violence and by responding quickly and effectively when violence occurs. To be truly comprehensive, however, a violence reduction program will seek to influence student attitudes toward violence, teach students and school staff effective conflict resolution skills, and work to create a climate that promotes tolerance and understanding among students and staff. Such a program will be most effective when blended within broader violence prevention efforts involving local law enforcement, juvenile probation, public health personnel, and other parent and community groups. When an entire community commits itself to reducing violence, the future health and well-being of its children and youth can only be enhanced. ♦

Adopted by the NASP Delegate Assembly, July 14, 1996.

For further information about NASP or the role of the school psychologist in preventing and intervening with school violence, contact NASP at 4340 East West Highway #402, Bethesda, MD 20814; or call: (301) 657-0270.

"As a society, we can't afford to let our children's mental health needs go unmet. Not when one in five children has a mental, emotional or behavioral problem; not when one in 20 children has serious emotional disturbance that impair their ability to function; and not when two-thirds of children with mental health problems are not even getting the help they need."

— DONNA SHALALA, U.S. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY (MARCH 5, 1996)

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Position Statement

Students With Attention Deficits

The National Association of School Psychologists advocates appropriate educational and mental health services for all children and youth. NASP further advocates noncategorical models of service delivery within the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities and students at risk for school failure.

NASP recognizes that there are students in schools with academic and adjustment problems who exhibit a constellation of behaviors commonly associated with ADD/ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). NASP also recognizes that it is difficult to distinguish attention deficits so severe as to require special education from the normal range of temperament and fluctuations in attention to which all students are susceptible.

Longitudinal data suggest that the problems associated with attention deficits present at an early age, may change over time, and that they may persist into adulthood. Therefore, NASP believes that interventions must be designed within a developmental framework. Furthermore, recognizing that these students are at particular risk for developing social-emotional and learning difficulties, NASP believes problems should be addressed early to reduce the need for long-term special education.

NASP believes that students with attention deficits can be provided special education services as appropriate under disability categories currently existing in EHA/IDEA. While concern has been expressed that children with attention deficits served in existing categories will not receive the most appropriate instruction for their unique needs, research indicates that disability categories or areas of teacher certification have no significant effect

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Position Statement

Student Grade Retention

The National Association of School Psychologists is committed to promoting educational practices that are demonstrably effective in enhancing the educational attainment of all children. The retention of students, while widely practiced, is in large measure not substantiated by sound research.

The cumulative evidence indicates that retention decisions cannot be validated using any standardized or competency-based tests and that retention can negatively affect achievement and social-emotional adjustment.

Retention has not been shown to be successful:

- When it is employed in lieu of other more effective interventions when students fail to learn;
- When it is used to postpone or supplant special education services;
- When it is used at the secondary level where it correlates positively with student drop-out rates;
- When retention or delayed school entrance is used with students with social or behavioral deficits linked to "developmental immaturity."

Retention is least likely to be harmful when students:

- lack serious deficits in the year prior to retention;
- have positive self-esteem and good social skills;
- show signs of difficulty in school because of lack of opportunity for instruction rather than lack of ability;
- do not have serious social, emotional, or behavioral deficits.

Therefore, it is resolved that the National Association of School Psychologists will:

1) Encourage early identification and intervention of academic, behavioral, and/or emotional difficulties to avoid the inappropriate use of retention.
2) Encourage use of interventions other than retention for students in academic difficulty.
3) Promote and publicize research comparing retention to alternative intervention practices at the kindergarten and first grade level with children determined to be at risk for school failure.
4) Encourage school psychologists to assist in the decision-making process about retention of individual students by examining:
   a) the child's school and developmental history,
   b) reasons for school failure (e.g., emotional problems, low ability, frequent school moves or absences),
   c) the effectiveness of instruction (e.g., teaching practices, the match between teaching and learning style and between student achievement level and curricular demands),
   d) the type and quality of alternative strategies (e.g., direct instruction, remedial services, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, etc.),
   e) student attitude toward retention and level of parental support, and
   f) the extent of alternative programming available in both the new and repeated grade.
5) Encourage NASP's state affiliate organizations and individual members to adopt positions and support research which promote alternative interventions to retention. ♦

Approved by the NASP Delegate Assembly, July, 1988

■ ADD... *from page 30*

on instructional methods or on effectiveness of service.

NASP believes that excessive emphasis on assessment and diagnosis at the expense of developing and monitoring effective interventions is not in the best interests of children. Assessment of youngsters with possible attention deficits should include intervention assistance to students and their teachers as pre-requisites to a formal assessment process.

NASP believes that effective interventions should be tailored to the unique learning strengths and needs of every student. For children with attention deficits, such interventions will often include the following:

1) Classroom modifications to enhance attending, work production, and social adjustment;

2) Behavior management systems to reduce problems in areas most likely to be affected by attention deficits (e.g., unstructured situations, large group instruction, transitions, etc.);

3) Direct instruction in study strategies and social skills, within the classroom setting whenever possible to increase generalization;

4) Consultation with families to assist in behavior management in the home setting and to facilitate home-school cooperation and collaboration;

5) Monitoring by a case manager to ensure effective implementation of interventions, to provide adequate support for those interventions, and to assess programs in meeting behavioral and academic goals;

6) Education of school staff in characteristics and management of attention deficits to enhance appropriate instructional modifications and behavior management;

7) Access to special education services when attention deficits significantly impact school performance;

8) Working collaboratively with community agencies providing medical and related services to students and their families. NASP believes appropriate treatment may or may not include medical intervention. When medication is considered, NASP strongly recommends:

1) That instructional and behavioral interventions be implemented before medication trials are begun;

2) That behavioral data be collected before and during medication trials to assess baseline conditions and the efficacy of medication; and

3) That communication between school, home, and medical personnel emphasize mutual problem solving and cooperation.

NASP believes school psychologists have a vital role to play in developing, implementing, and monitoring effective interventions with students with attention deficits. As an association, NASP is committed to publishing current research on attention deficits and to providing continuing professional development opportunities to enhance the skills of school psychologists to meet the diverse needs of students with attention deficits. ♦

Adopted NASP Delegate Assembly, September, 1991

New Publication

NASP's *Solve Your Child's School Related Problems* Hits Bookstores Nationwide

by C. Paul Mendez,
NASP Director of Communications

By the time you read this, NASP's first mass–market publication, *Solve Your Child's School Related Problems*, will be on sale in bookstores across the country. Published by HarperReference, a division of Harper–Collins Publishers, this 384–page paperback has been designed to help parents and school personnel work together to enhance children's success in school.

Editors Michael Martin and Cynthia Waltman–Greenwood are both NASP members. You may have seen them on TV or heard them on radio last month as part of the book's national promotional tour. Mike and Cindy spent over two years compiling information from NASP's many professional publications, such as *Children's Needs*, *Best Practices* and *Interventions*, and working closely with the publisher to ensure that the book's contents were accurate and complete, yet written in a style that would be accessible to the average parent. The final product covers almost 40 different school–related issues.

There are many benefits to authoring a mass–market book like *Solve Your Child's School Related Problems*. Families benefit by getting reliable, research–based advice for a variety of common problems that can prevent a child from doing his or her best in school. The profession benefits from the increased exposure and prestige that the book brings to school psychologists. Members benefit because the royalties earned enable NASP to provide more and better services without raising dues.

Although written for the layperson, *Solve Your Child's School Related Problems* has tips and suggestions which many school psychologists might find useful. It would make a good gift for parents with school–aged children. It would also be a good addition to any library, parent resource center, teacher lounge or as a textbook for a parenting class. Ask for it the next time you are in your favorite bookstore. ♦

What is a School Psychologist?

School psychologists are found in every school system in the nation. Over 24,000 in number, they are highly trained in education, mental health, child development and learning theory. They are problem solvers who, working with others, assist in changing environments, attitudes and systems to help children use their strengths to succeed in academic learning, social skills and citizenship. School psychologists coordinate and evaluate needs unique to individuals with special learning and behavior problems. They promote the use of research-based psychology theory to assist in curriculum, instruction and school reform. This is carried out through team problem solving; consultation; staff, teacher and parent training; research and evaluation; direct interventions; assessment; referral and case management in collaboration with other pupil services professionals, such as school social workers, counselors and others.

About NASP

The National Association of School Psychologists represents over 19,000 school psychologists and related professionals throughout the United States and in 25 foreign countries. Founded in 1969, it is the world's largest organization of school psychologists.

NASP serves its members and society by:

- Promoting the rights, welfare, education and mental health of children and youth; and
- Advancing the profession of school psychology.

This is accomplished through education, service, research and policy development. NASP credentials school psychologists through its Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) program and is a leading publisher of books for school psychologists, parents and educational professionals. Every year it holds an annual convention that is the world's largest gathering of school psychologists

For more information about NASP, complete and return the response form below.

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